

SIDDHA CULT IN TAMILNĀDU

ITS HISTORY AND HISTORICAL CONTINUITY

*A Thesis submitted to the Pondicherry University in partial fulfilment
of the requirement for the award of the degree of*

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN
HISTORY**

By
R. EZHILRAMAN

Under the Guidance of
Dr. N. CHANDRAMOULI
Associate Professor



**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
PONDICHERY UNIVERSITY
PUDUCHERRY - 605 014, INDIA
DECEMBER 2015**



Dr. N. CHANDRAMOULI
Associate Professor
Department of History
Pondicherry University
Puducherry -605 014

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled, “Siddha Cult In Tamilnādu: Its History and Historical Continuity” submitted to the Department of History, Pondicherry University for the award of Doctor of Philosophy in History is a record of original and independent work done by R. Ezhilraman during the period of his study (2008-2015) under my supervision and guidance. It is further certified that the thesis has not formed the basis for the award of any Degree, Diploma, Associateship, Fellowship or similar title.

Place: Puducherry

Date: 10.12.2015

(N. CHANDRAMOULI)
Research Supervisor



R. Ezhilraman
Ph.D., Scholar
Department of History
Pondicherry University
Puducherry - 605 014

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis entitled “Siddha Cult In Tamilnādu: Its History and Historical Continuity” submitted to the Pondicherry University, in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of the degree of *Doctor of Philosophy* in History in the Department of History, Pondicherry University is a bonafide work done by me under the guidance of Dr. N. Chandramouli, Associate Professor, Department of History, Pondicherry University and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any Degree, Diploma, Associateship, Fellowship or any other similar title of any candidate of any University or Institution.

Place: Puducherry

Date: 10.12.2015

(R. Ezhilraman)
Research Scholar

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Religion, in its earlier manifestation of a group of myriad, unorganized and pre-codified forms of cults and beliefs, carried the revitalizing and soothing message of an invisible, uncontrollable and unexplainable power that exercised a strong influence on the subconscious human mind. Those earlier manifestations of ‘religion’ can be seen in all the prehistoric societies of the past and simple societies of the present following the hunting-gathering / agro-pastoral way of subsistence. The portable art forms of Venus figurines of the Upper Palaeolithic in bone and ivory and the representation of female genital and secondary sexual organs in the Palaeolithic cave art portrays the strong influence of procreative symbolism in the Prehistoric belief system. One should not fail to recall in this connection that such primitive sex rites contributed everywhere to the development of religious ideas and, in a broad sense, to the evolution of human thought as a whole.

The evolution and spatial expansion of agricultural societies along with concomitant developments in subsistence strategies marked a paradigmatic shift in the belief systems, cults and practices. In place of the ‘fertility of animal and human worlds’, the ‘fertility of the soil’ takes precedence leading to the emergence of related rituals and practices. With the emergence of ‘chiefdoms’, ‘religion’ became an organized one catering to the diverse needs of a ‘professionally stratified’ society, assimilating into it the erstwhile cult systems, beliefs and practices. With the emergence of organised states/ kingdoms, the institution of ‘religion’ finally appears in a codified and structured form with elaborate ritual paraphernalia, stratified priestly class, subordinate servile classes, scriptural literature and monumental architectural establishments.

India, being the land of one of the oldest surviving civilizations of the world, can boast of giving birth to a variety of belief systems, cults, ritualistic practices and sectarian faiths, philosophies and literary compositions, beginning from the simple societies (hunting-gathering/agro-pastoral) to the elite ones (*Vēdic/Upaniṣadic/Purāṇic/Buddhist/Jain /Tāntric*). All of them survived into the 21st century, albeit in modified forms. This feature of a continuous and surviving religious history over

several millennia is one of the rarest features of human history in any part of the world.

Classical India never had a 'Religion' in the strict sense of a Western definition. The Sanskrit word '*dharma*', sometimes translated as *Religion*, means 'customary law' that was followed by the people voluntarily. Throughout classical South Asia, the study of law consisted of concepts such as penance, piety and ceremonial as well as practical traditions. In the context of emerging 'chiefdoms' and 'early states' based on social stratification and professional demarcation, 'religion' played the role of a 'cohesive force' between the rulers and the ruled. It was also during the same period one can notice the amalgamation of the prehistoric cults and belief systems in to the elite sectarian religions.

During the medieval period of Indian history 'Religion' performed its established role as the deliverer of spiritual emancipation and elevation. In this role, we have the development of scriptural literature first in Sanskrit and later in vernacular languages containing ritual formulations and their practical forms of application; philosophical discourses; iconographic prescriptions and injunctions; mythological stories on the origin of different classes/dynasties, temples and sacred centers, lineages of teachers; devotional music, dance and other forms of fine arts.

The evolution of Puranic theism coincides with the growth of Śaivism, Vaiṣṇavism and Śāktism as independent sectarian faiths, having their own philosophical, mythological, iconographical and ritual paraphernalia. The Bhakti movement of 7th Century C.E, one of the major contributions of south India to the pan-Indian religion emphasised the individualistic relationship with a personal deity rather than the more rule-bound strictures of traditional *Vēdic* Hinduism. Customarily discussed as a unified whole, the movement's message was expressed in diverse ways. At its core was the idea that salvation was attainable by all who believed, thus challenging the *Vēdic* system in which it was limited to male members of the '*dvija*' castes of Brahmin, Kśatriya and Vaiśya communities. It was in this movement that Women and members of the *sūdra* and untouchable communities were included and were offered a place of importance. In the vanguard of this movement were poet-saints who eschewed the Sanskrit language and rituals of Brahmin priests in favour of emotive devotional songs expressed in regional vernacular languages. These

proselytizers had diverse opinions regarding such things as the nature of prescribed ritual practices and the identity of their deity, be it Śiva, Viṣṇu or some other, but they shared a common devotional fervour. The institution of ‘temple’, which is the single most significant contribution of the Bhakti movement, played the catalytic role in bringing together all the social groups in to the ambit of spiritual urge, advancement and deliverance. The role of temple in the economic and cultural spheres of the times was more prominent than in the field of spirituality.

It is to be admitted that historically certain ideas and practices are evidently rooted primitive sex rites based on the magical association of natural and human fertility. Such magical belief systems and practices found their way into the philosophy, methods and practices of the sectarian groups of all faiths. They are manifested more prominently in the Saiva philosophy and practices.

The Early and Medieval Indian History saw the emergence of some radical and non-*vēdic* sectarian groups such as the *Pāśupata*, *Kāpālika*, *Kālamukha*, *Śakta* and *Siddha/Nātha* traditions of the *tāntric* branch which wielded considerable influence in the royal courts, affluent trade guilds and temples and among the masses as well. These sectarian faiths also made significant contributions to the efflorescence of arts and letters. The *tāntric* offshoots in Śaivism, Śaktism, Buddhism and Jainism gave supreme importance to the attainment of *Siddhi* in their philosophical thinking and practical methods. As a result of the involvement of diverse religious philosophies and sects in the Siddha cult, it emerged as a complex system in which the conceptual and practical ingredients of all the sectarian faiths can be identified. The intra-changes and inter-exchange of beliefs and rituals between these faiths continued throughout the medieval times, and these processes was so thorough and complete that none of the early religious systems could save their pure forms and all of them became totally *tāntric* in their philosophy, rituals and practices.

Tantra and Tāntrism

One of the main difficulties in defining *tantra* arises from the sensational connotations that the term has acquired over a period of time. In the beginning of 19th century, when the *tāntric* texts were being studied by the Westerners, *tantra* was believed to be a conglomeration of bizarre and unconventional religious disciplines

consisting of sorcery, black magic, exorcism, and orgiastic practices. According to early scholars, it occupied an obscure niche within Hindu, Buddhist and Jaina religions of India. As research progressed and a broader range of *tāntric* textual material came to light, it became clear that *tantra*, far from being an unconventional religious practice limited to a small group of heretics, was actually one of the major components in the philosophical tenets and ritual practices of Hinduism, Buddhism and all the sectarian faiths of India.

Even though *Tāntrism* does not hold the *Vēdas* in high esteem, and even frequently condemns them, it still embraces a number of *Vēdic* theories and practices. Ritual worship, meditative techniques and practices associated with numerous deities from the *Vēdas*, *Brāhmanās* and *Purāṇas* appear in the *tāntric* literature presented with a *tāntric* orientation. This vast literature even contains instructions on building temples and consecrating images of the deities; information on places of pilgrimage and the exact ritualistic or meditative practices to be performed there. Practices concerning the application of herbs, gems, minerals and astrology were also brought into the fold of *tāntric* spirituality¹. The *tāntric* ideals were absorbed by all sectarian faiths of India to such an extent that *tāntric* ideas are scattered throughout non-*tāntric* sources also.

Tāntric religion grew as a parallel tradition to the *Vēdic* in its content through the assimilation of various non brahminical², popular and heterodox cults and belief systems; scientific and technological treatises. At the earlier stage of history, *Tantra* arose as the sum total of man's knowledge of the objective world around him. Etymological interpretations of the word '*Tantra*', clearly and conclusively point out that originally the word had no special religious or metaphysical significance or meaning. It was a way of life that sought the significance of knowledge, not in the realization of an illusionary absolute, but in the day-to day activities of the men, in the simple facts of life like agriculture, cattle breeding, distillation, iron-smelting etc., and in experimental sciences like alchemy, medicine, embryology, physiology, with a deliberate theoretical orientation that the structure of the microcosm and the

¹ Pandit Rajamani Tigunait, *Śakti: The Power in Tantra*, Himalayan Institute press, Pennsylvania, 1998, p.19.

²The *Vēdic* philosophy branded *tantra* as *avaidic* and called for avoiding them and their followers. The *Kūrma Purāṇa* suggests that one should not even speak to the *Pāśupatas* and *Pañcarātras*. See S. C. Banerji, *A Brief History of Tantra Literature*, Naya Prokash, Calcutta, 1988, p.30

macrocosm are identical and that the key to the knowledge of nature is to be found in the human body itself. The etymological interpretations point to the fact that *Tantra* was a general term for any system serving as the guiding principle of any work and that the use of the work in a strictly religious sense evolved at a later date and came to indicate the scripture by which knowledge is spread³.

These pristine forms of *tāntric* religion and philosophy in course of time went through many alterations due to the superimposition of the brahminical thought and philosophy. In spite of all such mishandling, grafting and the burden of interpolations, *tantra* could retain its basic structure and meaning in clearly rejecting the caste system and patriarchy and on the philosophical front, all external formalities with regard to spiritual quest. *Tantra* once for all banished the gender inequalities⁴ and gave supreme importance to the women folk not only to be a part of the religion as practitioners but also as teachers. This place of a 'Guru' provided to the women folk was the single most lasting contribution of the *Tāntric* religion, a designation which in terms of the sacredness is even superior to the God, him or herself.

In the primitive *Tāntric* cosmogony woman as a mother of the race was considered essentially to be the life-producer. Her organs and attributes had been the life-giving symbols par excellence. But under diverse historical conditions *Tantra* eventually came under the *Vēdāntic* fold. Yet the primitive substratum remained unchanged despite the interpolations of the elite philosophy and ideology.

According to the *tāntric* view, the act of creation is due to the union of Female and male principles, the former being the more important functionary. The *Tāntric* system is characterized by the worship of *Śakti* or the female energy of Śiva. The

³The word *Tantra* is derived from the root 'Tan' which means 'to spread' the knowledge. '*Tantra*' literally means thread, threads in a loom; web; metaphorically: guideline through the labyrinth of *samsāra* towards liberation. In a special sense it means 'the scripture by which knowledge is spread' (*tanyate vistāryate jñānam anena iti tantram*). In the initial stages, *tantra*, similar to the *Vēda*, is meant for study and understanding of the secular and practical aspects of the world, the knowledge of which is preserved with various communities of craft specialization. In course of time, these secular and practical treatises underwent transformation towards metaphysical approach and lost their practical applications. As they came under the influence of sectarian religions, *Tāntric* texts began to develop under separate schools of thought such as Śaiva and Śakta in the initial stages and later *Lōkayata*, *Sahājayana* and *Vajrayāna*. (N.N. Bhattacharyya, 1992, Preface and Introduction, p.1)

⁴The main feature of the *Tāntric* philosophy is the high standard to which they have raised womanhood. She is considered to be the embodiment of all the primeval energy, and as such deserves all the veneration. She is elevated to the status of a teacher who can even give initiation to her children. In short, she is the active half of the *Ādinātha* (Śiva) who is nothing more than a 'Sava' (corpse) without her.

Tāntric worshippers are otherwise called the *Kaulas* and their practices are known as *Kulācārā* (*Kaulācāra*). Tradition says that the *Kulācārā* system was brought down by Siddha Mīṇanātha to the earth. This tradition clearly establishes the relationship between the Siddha and *Tāntric* cults⁵. Particularly in Bengal region, *Tāntrism* has tended to merge with the Śākta cult⁶. Though the term ‘*tantra*’ commonly applies to Śaiva or Śākta works of the *Tāntric* tradition, it is difficult to distinguish the Śāktism from Śaivism. Śāktism is the worship of the Supreme Power as divine creative energy (*Śakti*). Here, a female force creates, regulates, and destroys the cosmos. She is also worshipped as Śiva’s spouse, as the dreadful Goddess Durgā or Kālī⁷.

The female principle of Śakti played a predominant role in Tantric philosophy and rituals, which gradually developed into an independent cult. Vast mythology developed around this great goddess The Seven Mothers (*Saptamātrikas*): Brāhmi, Māheśwari, Kaumāri, Vaiṣṇavi, Vārāhi, Indrāṇi and Chāmundi, were identified as the consorts of their male counterparts. Another factor is her identification as Sarasvati, as the goddess of Learning, the revealer of divine knowledge. *Śakti* is generally worshipped in three forms. Firstly, in her ordinary form. Secondly in her fierce form which is generally associated with the Kāpālikas, who offered animal and human sacrifices to propitiate Her. The third is the sensual form in which she is the object of worship with the school of the Śāktas or Kaulās. In this form she is called as *Ānandabhairavi*, *Lalitā* and *Tripurasundarī*. She is conceived as enthroned in *Śricakra*, consisting of several triangles in upward and downward direction, which is a symbolic form of male- female unity. Much Tantric literature has been produced with mythological explanation of the mystic circles and of the technical terms involved in the *Śakti* worship.

Tāntric influences have been strong in Śaivism from sixth century C.E towards the end of the Gupta period, when this religious current first became important. *Tāntrism* blended with *yōga*, particularly *haṭhayōga*, forms the doctrinal

⁵ B.S.L. Hanumantha Rao, *Religion in Āndhra: A Survey of Religious Developments in Āndhra from early times up to C.E. 1325*, Archaeological series No. 69, Dept. of Archaeology and Museums, Govt. of Āndhra Pradesh, Hyderabad, 1993, p. 291-292

⁶ The provenance of the *tantras* is controversial. One floating tradition in the form of a verse says that the *tāntric* branch of knowledge which first appeared in *Gaudadeśa* (Bengal), was developed by the people of *Mithila* (Bihar), prevailed at some places in Maharashtra, and met with destruction in *Gurjara* (Gujarat). See S. C. Banerji, *A Companion to Tantra*, Abhinav Publications, Delhi, 2007, p.14.

⁷ Mircea Eliade (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Religions*, Vol.7, p.174

basis of the medieval Śaiva sect of the Nāthas, who were also often called as Siddhas and Kānpḥaṭa *yogīs*. This group emphasizes *yōgic* control over mind and body including the winning of magical powers (*siddhis*) and aims at spiritual enlightenment through the domination of the inner ‘serpent power’ called *Kuṇḍalini Śakti*, which is believed to lie within the veins or nerves (*nāḍīs*) and centers (*cakras*) of a *yōgic* body. The impact and influence of the Kānpḥaṭa sect continues mainly through the diffusion of *haṭhayōga* into the mainstream Hinduism during medieval times and loses its control over the elite and popular sections of the society after 15th century C.E. However, a few *Nātha yōgīs* still exist in different parts of the country⁸.

During the medieval period in south India, the Hindu religion deviated from its common textual prescriptions, traditions and institutions. Unlike the Nāyaṇārs, the canonised Tamil Śaiva saints who were also basing themselves on the *tāntric* mysticism, the Śaiva *Siddhāntins* of the southern part of the Tamil region, preached that God as a spiritual guide or *guru*, graciously permits himself to be realized by the purified souls. The Śaiva *Siddhānta* had a *tāntric* branch, known as *agamānta Śaivism* patronised by the Cōlā rulers. They did not attach any importance to the *Vēdas*. They also abandon many traditional elements like caste, image worship, etc. On the other hand, the religio-philosophic idealist and monist Kāśmīr School of Śaivism disagrees in certain important respects with the teaching of Śaṅkara (8th century), the founder of *Advaita* monism, derived from the *Upaniṣādic Vēdānta* as a system of absolute idealism that is mainly followed by the intellectual elite. Śaṅkara, a native of Malabar resided in Vāranāsi (Benaras/Kāśī) travelled across the sub-continent and established a monastic order and monasteries (*mathas*). Like many hermitages (*āśramās*) and great shrines, these *mathas* became centers of brisk and vibrant religious activity and contributed to the realization of his ideal of Hindu unity. Then in the later periods, after the emergence of the individual structural temples and temple complexes, the temple centered rituals became more prominent. They include in it all sorts of *Tāntric* influences, more particularly in the temples dedicated to Śaiva and Śakti than the Vaiṣṇavite ones.

It was in *Tāntrism*, that the *Siddha* philosophy could develop into a codified system of learning and propagation because *Tāntrism* was not a *mōkṣa sāstra*, but

⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol.13, p.10

advocated the attainment of *Siddha kāya* to be a *Jīvan mukta*, within a life span to reach the state of *Paramahansa*⁹, the highest stage of *tāntric sādhana*. Therefore, *Tantra* is known as all-comprehensive knowledge of the fact that the external objects about one's life are nothing but the outcome of certain conscious forces within. The objects and the beings of the material world are due to the play of the conscious energy in its various manifestations. Thus, *tantra* is a great source of knowledge about the social and religious life of ancient and medieval India. Nobody can claim to know about Indian religion fully and correctly without the study of *Tantras*¹⁰.

Tāntrism as a school of spiritual teaching and practices stressed the necessity of involving all the constituents and dynamic forces of the human personality, including the emotions and bodily functions, in the process of spiritual endeavour, and recognized their affinity and interrelatedness with the cosmic forces which are to be integrated in order to achieve ultimate fulfillment and liberation¹¹. Some relegate these *Tantras* to the class of black magic, whereas others consider them full of obscenities and unfit for the study of a man of good taste. But speaking the truth, like the *Vēda*, *Tantra* was primarily the way or means to understand the mysteries of life and universe. It arose as the sum total of human knowledge of the objective world and a way of life that sought the significance of knowledge, in the daily activities of men, such as agriculture, cattle breeding, iron smelting, alchemy, medicine, embryology, and so on.

Tāntrism developed most vigorously from the 4th to 6th centuries C.E., in areas where Brahmanic penetration had been weakest: in the Northwest, in Bengal and Assam in the East, and in the Āndhra area of the South. These are areas where one must assume non-Aryan influences in general, and more particularly tribal and folk practices involving *Shamanism*, witchcraft, and sorcery, and at least in the East and

⁹ According to *tantra*, *Hamsa* is the symbol of *puruṣa-prakṛti tattva*. *Ham* is male or Śiva; *Sah* is female and Śakti. Śiva - Śakti are therefore *Hamsa* which combined mean the bird. The material shape of this bird is variously described as that of a goose, flamingo and duck in various ways. *Hamsa* thus symbolize the unity of male and female elements which is the ultimate goal of *tāntrika Sādhana*. To the *Vāmācāra* School, the reversal of *Hamsa* is the method of *Tāntric* practice which is applied in the context of sex rites also in addition to the yogic *Sādhana* of *Kundalini Śakti*. (John Woodroffe, 2004, p.165)

¹⁰ Rajkumar Pruthi and Rameshwari Devi, *Religions and Faiths in India*, Mangal Deep Publications, Jaipur, 2004, p. 18

¹¹ Haridas Bhattacharyya, (ed.), *The Cultural Heritage of India Vol IV: The Religions*, The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta, 2nd Edn, 1956, p. 211

South, a cult of the Goddess. *Tāntrism* represented an outlook that placed the Goddess at the center of its “extensions” and to some extent, it cut across the sectarian and religious distinctions, whether it is Hindu, Buddhist, or even Jain¹².

The chief focus of *tāntric* rituals and practices is on the attainment of a physically strong body (*Siddhadēha* or *Kāya*) through various *yōgic* practices. *Prāṇāyāma* (controlled breathing) is one such *yōgic* exercise. Through several forms of the *Prāṇāyāma*, the innate energy in the human body identified as female energy is aroused to meet of the two aspects of *Tāntrism* namely, the sophisticated and the popular, the latter incorporates a number of non-Brahmanical Hindu elements – one of which is the concept of *Śakti*. *Śakti* resides in human body as the serpent power (*kuṇḍalini*) within *mūlādhāra cakra*. The dormant female energy is awakened by *yōgic* exercises and then she is to be taken up through the regions of five other *cakras* to the realm of *sahasrāra* at the center of the head, to merge with the male energy¹³. If the *sādhaka* gets success in this nearly impossible endeavour of unifying the female and male energies, he attains salvation (*jīvanmukti*) and the highest virtues. The term *mantra* includes two powers such as, the *vācakā* and *vācyā*. The word *vācakā* embodies words as well as sounds. There are two grades of sound and these are called *bindu* and *nāda*. *Bindu* is *Śiva*; *bīja* is *Śakti*, while the term *nāda* combines *Śiva* and *Śakti*. *Śiva* is recognized as the male principle and *Śakti* denotes the female principle, and through their union (*kāma-kala*) proceeds creation (*śr̥ṣṭi*).

Tantras are generally classified into two types namely ‘left-hand’ and ‘right-hand’. *Tantra* interprets the anti-Brahmanic practices of the left metaphorically, and also include under its heading a wide variety of ceremonial rituals assimilated into Hinduism that are simply non-*Vēdic*. These include the use of non-*Vēdic mantras* as well as *yantras* and *maṇḍalas*, anionic and non-*Vēdic* geometric devices. Adepts come from all castes, but low-caste and even tribal practitioners and teachers are especially revered. The goal of liberation within the body takes the specific form of

¹² Mircea Eliade (ed.), *Op.cit*, Vol.6, p. 352

¹³ By the yogic control of breath, the thirty knots in the spinal cord can be loosened, as a result of which the two vital winds, *prāṇa* and *apana*, can enter the spinal cord and move upwards as *hamsa* through the six nerve plexuses – *mūlādhāra*, *svadhisthāna*, *maṇipura*, *anāhata*, *viśuddha* and *ājna* – and on reaching the *Sahasrāra* region, assume the nature of *sūnya*. There are 7200 nerves within the body of which sixty-four can be distinctly located and fifteen utilized for yogic purposes. For more details see T. N. Misra, *Impact of Tantra on Religion and Art*, D.K. Print world (P) Ltd., New Delhi, 1997, p.95.

seeking magical powers (*siddhis*), which in orthodox forms of Hinduism are regarded as hindrances to spiritual achievement. Under the guidance or initiation of a *Guru*, who embodies the desired fulfillment and its transmission, the *siddhis* are sought through *yōgic* practices, through their anatomical analysis of the “subtle body” (*līṅga śarīra*). First practiced is *haṭha-yōga*, the “*yōga* of exertion or violence,” that is, rigorous physical discipline geared to coordinating the body’s “ducts” or “channels” (*nāḍīs*) and “energy centers” (*cakras*). This is followed by *kuṇḍalinī-yōga*, which awakens the dormant *śakti*, conceived as a coiled-up “serpent power” in the lowest *cakra* between the genitals and the anus, so that it (or she) can pierce and transform all the *cakras* (*cakrabhēda*) (usually six) and unite with Śiva in the “thousand-petalled Lotus/*cakra*” (*Sahasrāra*) in the region of the brain.

Beyond these practices, “left-handed” *Tantriks* pursue in literal fashion the ceremonial use and application of the “five ‘m’s” (*pañca-makāra pūjā*). They incorporate into their cultic practices five ‘sacraments’ beginning with the syllable *ma*: fish (*matśya*), meat (*māmsa*), parched grain/postures/gestures of hand (*mudra*)¹⁴ regarded as an aphrodisiac, wine (*madya*), and finally sexual intercourse (*maithuna*). It is likely that most, if not all, of these practices involve the incorporation of elements of the cult and mythology of the Goddess, who is described as having delight in meat and wine and is approached by lustful demons for sexual intercourse. *Tāntric* texts stress that these practices are to be carried out within a circle of adepts and supervised by a male and female pair of “lords of the circle” who insist on strict ritual conventions that guard against an orgiastic interpretation. Theoretically, the practitioner is supposed to retain his semen at the point of orgasm, this being a sign not only of profound dispassion but an actualization of the non-procreative union of Śiva and Śakti at the dissolution of the universe of dualities. The Siddha /Nātha tradition symbolize the most comprehensive understanding and application of the theoretical and methodological tenets of *Tāntric* philosophy.

To summarise the main characteristic features of the *tantra sāstra*, the first thing that comes out prominently is its acceptance in to its fold all the classes of people irrespective of caste, creed or sex. It offered freedom to be engaged in spiritual

¹⁴ *Mudrās* are mystical figures made by intertwining or twisting the fingers and hands. The figures are supposed to resemble various animals and objects and to possess great power as occult forces. See Maurice A. Canney, *Encyclopaedia of Religions*, NAG Publications, Delhi, 1976, p. 250

practice according to one's competence and shows the practical method which would qualify him or her (*Sādhaka*) to proceed along the higher path of knowledge, in terms of experience as distinguished from or opposed to the theoretical one.

The Tāntric Sects

Although the tenets of *Tāntrism* were absorbed by almost all the elite religions and got transformed into their mythology, rituals and philosophy, two of the Śaivite path occupies an important place as the *athimārgikās* in the *tāntric* parlance. These sects represent a special ritualistic trend, a tradition of hoary antiquity containing many obscure elements. They are the Kāpālikas and Kālamukhas, considered to be the offshoots of the ancient Pāśupatas, play a significant role in popularizing Śaivism not only in the royal courts, but also among the masses during the period between 6th to 13th centuries C.E. The Kālamukhas even enjoyed the status of royal preceptors in medieval south India as also great scholars in *Śaiva Siddhānta*. The literary compositions of the Kāpālikas and Kālamukhas are a few but the tenets of their beliefs and practices may be gleaned from other literary sources.

Another *Tāntric* sect which enjoyed even more popularity and patronage both at the elite and popular levels during the medieval period is that of the Nātha Siddhas, whose influence extends over the entire subcontinent and continues into the present century. Between these three sectarian groups, there are many commonalities in terms of philosophy, mythology, cosmology, rituals and even individuals of the holy order. These sects represented a special ritualistic trend, a tradition of hoary antiquity, containing many obscure and primitive elements. They are considered to be the most *athimārgikās* of the Śaiva lineage.

The Kāpālikas

The Kāpālas or Kāpālikas appear to have been closely related to the *Sōmas*, *Saumas* or *Sōmasiddhāntins*¹⁵. This class of sectarian Śaiva faith seems to have originated very early on the religious stage of Ancient Indian History. The *ṛgvēda* contains a hymn known as '*keśisūkta*' which contain a description of a class of ascetics who were half-naked, or had only short brown garments soiled with dust,

¹⁵ C. Chakravarti, 'The Soma or Sauma Sect of the Saivas', in *Indian Historical Quarterly*, 1932, Vol. 8, pp.221-23.

kept long hair. Although scantily mentioned in the inscriptions¹⁶ of the ancient or medieval periods, the Kāpālikas were described in detail in the legends and literary works of the times¹⁷. The Kāpālikas seem to have originated in south India, and Śrisaīlam happens to be their main center of activity. The aim of the Kāpālikas was not simply achieving divine bliss but attaining the magical *yōgic* powers (*Aṣṭa siddhis*), which were the most sought after in the traditional *yōgic* practices which aim at the attainment of *Siddhadēha* and ultimately *Dīvyadēha*¹⁸. They used *six mudrās*: *kaṇṭhahāra* (Necklace), *alamkāra* (ornament), *kuṇḍala* (ear rings), *bhasma* (ashes) and *yagnopavita* (sacred thread). Their identity marks *Kapāla* (Skull) and *Khatvāṅga* (club) were not mentioned as part of the *six mudrās* (*mudrika ṣaṭka*). They aim for the attainment of highest happiness located in the female organ (*Bhagāsana Sthāna*) which is to be propitiated through the usage of *Pañca-makāra Sādhana*¹⁹. Patañjali described them as ‘*āyahśūlika*’ (one with an iron lance /trident). Śiva worshipped by them is in the form of ‘*Kapālēśwara*’.

Briggs gave a detailed description of the Kāpālikas²⁰ thus: “*They went about naked, wore a cap while travelling, smeared their bodies with funeral ashes, were armed with a trident or sword, carried a hollow skull for a cup or begging bowl, were half-intoxicated with spirits which they drank from the hollow skull, were known to commit acts of violence; their garments (when they wore them) were of patch-work, they slept on the ground, and wore a rosary of rudrākṣa seeds. They offered human sacrifices to Cāmuṇḍā in order to obtain magic powers, and often resorted to tricks to ensnare victims. Dust from their feet was supposed to cure disease and water from the washing of their feet drove away demons. The powers which they acquired included the ability to fly through air. Their wits were sharpened by the use of wine, eating*

¹⁶ Lorenzen discussed inscriptions from medieval Karnāṭaka speaking about the presence of the Kāpālikas during 9th -13th Centuries C.E. in Lorenzen, David N. *Kāpālikas and Kālamukhas: Two Lost Saivite sects*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1972, (Rev.edn.1991), pp. 24-29; Appendix –pp. 215-223.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, pp.31-71

¹⁸ David Gordon White, *The Alchemical Body: Siddha Tradition in Medieval India*, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1996, p. 102.

¹⁹ N. N. Bhattacharya, *Op.cit.*, p. 254. He who knows the essence of the six insignia, who is proficient in the highest *mudrā*, and who meditates of the Self as seated in the vulva (*bhagāsana-sṭha*) attains *nirvāṇa*. (The Kāpālikas) define the six insignia as the *kaṇṭhika* (earring), the *rucaka* (necklace), the *kuṇḍala* (earring), the *śikhāmaṇi* (crest jewel), ashes (*bhasma*), and the sacred thread (*yajñopavīta*). The skull (*kapāla*) and the *khatvāṅga* club are declared to be the secondary insignia (*upamudrā*). If the body is marked with these (various insignia) one is not born again here (on earth). See Lorenzen, David N., *Op.cit.*, p. 220

²⁰ Briggs, G.W., *Gorakhnāth and the Kānpata Yogis*, p. 224-25.

distinguished food, and the embrace of the Śakti of Bhairava. They were always lewd, and on occasion carried off maidens”.

The Kālamukhas

Originating in Kaśmir the Kālamukhas formed the principal branch of Pāśupata Śaivism in Karnāṭaka, Āndhra and Tamiḷnāḍu regions during 9th – 13th Centuries C.E. They are closely associated with the Lakulisas as the exponents of the Pāśupata philosophy in the south. They are said to have descended from the third disciple of Lakulīswara by name Kauruṣa or Kālānana²¹. Technically they were more extreme in their practices than the Kāpālikas, but they cannot be identified or distinguished²². They are referred to as royal preceptors (*Rājagurus*) in the inscriptions of the medieval south Indian dynasties during that period. As many as 90 inscriptions refer to the Kālamukha sect, its branches, *pariṣads* and donations made to these in the form of temples, land grants etc.²³ The Kālamukhas are described as making a ‘*Siṃha Nāda*’ (roar of a lion) by blowing through the horn of an antler. One of their scholarly and spiritual assemblies called ‘*Simha Pariṣad*’ is mentioned in some of the inscriptions of Āndhra region. Another ‘*Śakti pariṣad*’ was mentioned to be active in the Karnāṭaka region. The names of the Kālamukha teachers and royal preceptors were suffixed by terms like ‘*Jīya*’, ‘*śakti*’, ‘*rasi*’, ‘*paṇḍita*’, etc. They are described as having the ash mark on their forehead. The spiritual parents of the Kālamukhas were the Pāśupatas, Both sects revere the legendary teacher Lakulīśa. Both of them bear similar or identical names and undertake pilgrimages to Kedārnāth and Sṛīparvata. The Kālamukhas enjoyed munificent royal patronage from almost all south Indian dynasties such as Chāḷukyās, Kākatīyas, Cōḷās and Pāṇḍyas during medieval period. They acted as the heads of a large number of Mathas in such important pilgrim centres as Śrisaīlam, Ālampūr, Bezawada, Amarāvati, Dakṣārama, Agastēśvaram, in Āndhra Pradesh²⁴.

²¹ V.S.Pathak, *History of Saiva Cults in Northern India from Inscriptions*, Varanasi, 1960, p.28

²² Briggs, G.W., *Gorakhnāth and the Kānpata Yogis*, p. 15

²³ Lorenzen, David N., *Op.cit.*

²⁴ B.S.L.Hanumantha Rao, *Religion in Andhra (A survey of Religious Developments in Andhra from early times upto A.D.1325)*, 1993 (Rev.edn), Hyderabad, p.287.

The Nātha Siddhas

The Siddhas or Nātha Siddhas are one of the most respected spiritual teachers who still have the same divine standing among their followers, who in majority belong to the marginalized sections of the society. The antiquity of the Siddha Cult is as old as the *Tāntric* religion itself which encompass almost all religious faiths of the country, past and present. In fact, the Siddha Cult transcended the narrow religious or dogmatic boundaries and became a part and parcel of the body politic of the Indian spiritual tradition and Philosophy as a whole²⁵. But the popularity of the Siddha Cult became more pronounced during the medieval times.

Nāthism originated among persons belonging to the lower sections of the Society. The *Nātha-Siddhas* had a general predilection toward occult practices and acquisition of supernatural powers. They believe in the divine power of the *Guru* or preceptor who initiates the disciple according to his receptivity. According to *Nātha* cosmology, before the creation everything was dark and void. In that vacuity came into being a bubble from which an egg was formed. From the sweat of the primal god, *Ādinātha*, was born in his lover Kētaki or Mānasa, and from their union sprung Brahma, Viṣṇu and Śiva. In order to test them *Ādinātha* assumed the form of a mutilated corpse. Having seen the corpse Brahma and Viṣṇu avoided it, but Siva recognized it as the body of his father and took it to the cremation ground. When the body was in flames, *Mūṇanātha* sprang from its navel, Gōrakṣa from its head, Hādi-pa from its bones, Kānu-pa from its ear, and Chauraṅgi from its legs. They are the five original *Nātha Siddhas*²⁶ who are also called as the *Ādi Pañcākam*. It is not clearly known when these five *Ādi Nāthas* were added up to become *Nava Nāthas*.

Since very early times, the popular belief systems, magical rites and rituals found their way into the Śaiva and Śakta sectarian philosophy, rituals and pantheon. The original classification of Śaivism was into three schools: *Vēdic*, *tāntric* and *Miśra*. In course of time, *tāntric* ideology was affected by all of them in various degrees. The *Vāmācāra* and *Dakṣiṇācāra* classification of *tāntric* sects in both of them speak about the Brahminical interpolation. Interpolating the popular beliefs and

²⁵ N. Chandramouli, 'Siddha Cult In South India : Representations In Art And Their Ramifications', (Paper presented in the International Seminar on 'World Religions after September 11th: An Asian Perspective' Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, 17-19, January, 2009)

²⁶ Lorenzen David N., *Op.cit.*, p.285

rites, it is in the *Vāmācāra* sects that the *tāntric* religion blossomed in various directions of which the Siddha cult is the most important and long lasting one.

The Siddha cult spread in various directions and ultimately got absorbed by the Tibetan Buddhism and again got transported into the Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava schools of Hinduism during the medieval times. In the process of its development and spread the *Siddha* cult absorbed various elements of other belief systems such as Pāśupata, Kāpālika, Vajrayāna, Śakta and so on. As a result, the medieval *Nātha Siddha* cult grew as an amalgamation of all these diverse sectarian beliefs and practices, which later further absorbed into its fold even the Sūfī philosophy and personalities. Even today in South India the *Siddha* tradition in various forms is still in a flourishing state having millions of devout adherents.

Two later works place some symbolic elegance on the Nine Nāthas: the *Tantrarāja Tantra* correlates the Nine Nāthas with the nine bodily orifices, while the *Tantra Mahārṇava* identifies eight Nātha Siddhas with the eight cardinal directions. This latter list places Ādinātha at the ‘center’ of the Indian universe, in the land of Kurukṣētra; a location that would correspond to a widespread *Kaula* doctrine, which calls the central *pītha* of its mystic universe, the *Ādipītha*.

In the *Satsahasāra Samhita* and the *Samvartārthaprakāsa*, two other works of the Western Transmission, this group of nine (abstract) Nāthas are doubled into a set of eighteen Nāthas or Siddhas as the case with the Tamiḷ tradition which holds that there were originally nine Sittars, before their number was doubled to eighteen.

However, the aggregate of the Nine Nāthas came to be identified, during 11th-13th century, with the legendary or historical founders of the *Nātha sampradāya*. The historical name that headed most lists was that of Matśyēndra/Mīṇanāth/Luipā. These names often found together with Gōrakṣa, Carpati, and Nāgārjuna in the Siddha lists. Next in frequency are Chaurāṅgi, Vyāli, Ādināth, Tanti or Tintini, Karnari/Kanerī, and Bhairava, followed by Jālandhara, Kanthadī, and Gōvinda. Of these, the following names appear in all three types of Siddha lists, i.e., of the Indo-Tibetan *Siddhācāryas* (numbering 84), Indian Mahāsiddha *yōgins*, and Indian Rasa Siddhas:

Matśyēndra-Mīṇa, Gōrakṣa, Nāgārjuna, Carpati, Chaurāṅgi, Tanti/Tintini, Karnari/Kaneri, and Kanthadi²⁷ (see Appendix 1).

There is no uniform list found regarding the names of the Nātha-siddhas. The most commonly occurring names are (1) Matśyēndra, (2) Gōrakṣ, (3) Carpati, (4) Jālandhara, (5) Kaneri, and (6) Chaurāṅgi. Also figuring in many lists are (7) Nāgārjuna, (8) Bhārtrhari, and (9) Gopīcand. Ādināth is often added to head the list, in the role of creator god, this is a tradition that dates back at least to the *Kulārṇava Tantra*, which places him at the head of the divine stream (*divyaugha*) in its enumeration of the founding *Kaula gurus*.

Furthermore, there are many regional variations in the name employed for any given Nātha Siddha: just as Matśyēndra can become Mīṇa; so Nāgārjuna can become Nāgnāth or Arjun Nāga; Kaneri, Kṛṣṇapāda, or Kānha; Gōrakṣ or Gōrakṣa; Carpati either Karpati or Carpata; Chaurāṅgi or Pūran Bhagat; and Jālandhara or Hādi-pā. G. W. Briggs in his work mentions the names of Nava Nāthas as Gōrakṣanātha, Matśyēndranātha, Carpatanātha, Maṅgalanātha, Ghugonātha, Gopinātha, Prānanātha, Suratanātha and Cambanātha²⁸.

By illustrating such variants, David Gordon White offer four lists of the nine founding Nāthas, all of which date from the 13th to 16th centuries. In Bengal, two sources dating from the seventeenth century but harking back to earlier traditions provide the following data of eight Nāthas viz., (1) Ādinātha (identified with Śiva) is the founder of the order; his two disciples are (2) Mīṇanātha (Matśyēndranātha) and (3) Jālandhari-pā (Hādi Siddha); (4) Gōrakhnātha is the disciple of Mīṇanātha; (5) Queen Mayanāmatī is the disciple of Gōrakhnātha; (6) Kānha-pā and (7) Gopīcand are the disciples of Jālandhari-pā; and (8) Bail Bhādāi, the disciple of Kānha-pā.

According to a 13th-14th century Maharashtrian source, the divine founder of the clan is Dattātreya, who is the guru of (1) Matśyēndranāth and (2) Jalendra (Jālandharanāth). Matśyēndra is the guru of (3) Gōrakhnāth, (4) Carpati, and (5) Revana; while Jalendra is the guru of (6) Karina-pā (Karnarī-pā); (7) Bhārtrhari and (8) Gopīcand. Gōrakhnāth is the guru of (9) Gahanināth. The third list is found in a

²⁷ *Ibid.* p.91-92

²⁸ G. W. Briggs, *Gorakhnāth and the Kānphata Yogis*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1938, p. 136.

ca.1400 C.E., Telugu text from Āndhra Pradesh, the *Navanātha Charitra* of Gaurana, which was written at the behest of the abbot of a Śaiva monastery at Śrisailam. The fourth list is adapted from a ca.16th century *paramparā* recorded in the Punjab, which gives the following succession: Śakti and Śiva (1) initiated Ude (2), second of the Nine Nāthas and founder of the *Jōgi panth*. His descendants were two demons, Rudrāgan and Jālandhar. Descended from Jālandhar, the demon convert and initiate were Matsyēndra (3) and Jālandhari-pā (4). Matsyēndra was the *guru* of Gōrakh (5), Arujan Nāga (6), and the father and *guru* of the two Jain *tīrthaṅkaras* Nimnāth and Pārasnāth (7). Jālandhari-pā's disciples were Bārtrināth (Bhartrhari) (8) and Kānipā (Kānha-pā) (9)²⁹.

The most important feature of this cult is the belief in attaining supernatural powers through *yōgic* practices. The Siddhas are believed to be experts in the four kinds of *Yōga*³⁰ and to have attained the eight *siddhis*³¹. They used to command great influence among the rulers and the people in the early medieval period in Āndhra and Karnāṭaka. Śrisailam is also referred as the nucleus for all the Śaiva religious activities in those days. Though there are no exclusive followers of the cult in Karnāṭaka, the centres of their activity are there even now. Gōrakhnāth and Matsyēndranāth themselves are believed to have popularized the cult in Karnāṭaka. Nātha Panth *mathas* are found in many parts of Karnāṭaka beginning from Handi Badganāth in Belgaum district to Kadire and Vittal in Dakṣiṇa Kannada. Bhois of Gulbarga area are among the followers of Nātha Pantha³².

The Nātha Siddhas being Śaivites by sectarian affiliation, are described with characteristic attributes /marks (as the Kāpālikas) such as the sacred ash mark (*tripundra*= three horizontal lines of ash), ear-rings, woolen sacred thread to which are tied the horn and brass bell (signifying the principles of Śiva and Śakti as *nāḍa* and *pavitri*), the wallet or a cloth/skin bag on the right shoulder, and the club (*daṇḍa*). They are said to have sect mark of a 'yōni-līṅga' the organ of regeneration symbolizing divine procreation, on their right forearm. The Nātha Siddhas are also

²⁹ David Gordon White, *The Alchemical Body*, p.92

³⁰ The four kinds of *yōga* are *Mantra-yōga*, *Laya-yōga*, *Haṭha-yōga* and *Rāja-yōga*. For more details see Gavin Flood, *An Introduction to Hinduism*, p.96.

³¹ B.S.L. Hanumantha Rao, *Op.cit*, p. 290.

³² Suryanath U. Kamath (ed.), *Op.cit*, pp. 427-428.

known as *Kaphat* (split ear) *yōgis* the followers of whom spread across the subcontinent, north of the Vindhya and extends into the adjoining Nepal.

Siddha Cult in South India

Siddha cult is one of the celebrated and popular cults in south India. Both the Siddha and the *Nava Nātha* cult of South India becomes the most popular sectarian faith of the *tāntric* group during the 9th-12th centuries which is the amalgamation of the Śaiva, Śākta, Vajrāyana, Sahājayana schools of philosophy and by the 12th century the narrow sectarian differences between these religious sects disappear and the codified system of all these got fully developed in the Nātha Siddha cult. The Siddha cult was popularly more pronounced during the medieval times and also continuing as a popular cult in this present era.

The origin of the Siddha cult is not authentically dated but can be related to the earliest form of Śaivism *i.e.*, the Pāśupata School of Śaivism. ‘The term *Siddha* is a Sanskrit expression which means one who has attained *siddhi*. *Siddhi* itself means generally perfection reached as a consequence of certain modes of penance. A Siddha was an inspired seer who had a vision to read not only the past and the present, but could also read the future’³³. But Tirumūlar’s view that a Siddha not only is one who has untied the knots of past *karma*, but also squeezed and crushed the roots of future *karma*³⁴. Most of the Siddhas belong to the marginalized sections of the society. This cult transcended the narrow religious or dogmatic boundaries and became a part of the Indian spiritual tradition and Philosophy. Siddhas used to command great influence among the rulers and the people in the early medieval period in Āndhra and Karnāṭaka³⁵. Even today in south India the Siddha tradition in various forms is in a flourishing state having with millions of devout adherents.

Nātha Siddha Cult of Āndhra Pradesh

The Siddhas appear to have commended great respect in medieval society in Āndhra region. The Telugu literature of the age makes copious references to the

³³ V. Ramachandra Dikshitar, ‘The Siddhas of South India’, in the *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 7th Session, Vol. 7, Madras University, Madras, 1944, p.162.

³⁴ *Ibid*, p. 20

³⁵ P.V. Parabrahma Sastry, *Sri Sailam: Its History and Cult*, Srisaila Devasthanam Publication, Sri Sailam, (4th Edn), 2007, p.35

Siddhas, their learning and their powers. The *Vikramārka Charitra* of Jakkana refers to one of the numerous *Mantras*, called *Siddhasārasvata mantra*, which is believed to make the practitioner proficient in all branches of learning. Vallabhāmātya also makes a reference to the same *mantra* in his *Kridābhirāmam*. Gaurana wrote his *Navanātha Charitra* at the instance of Mukti Sāntarāya, the pontiff of the Bhikṣavrtti *matha* on the Śrīparvata or Śrisailam. The stories of the Siddhas were narrated at public places like the *Purāṇas*³⁶.

Śrisailam was the seat of the *Yōgic* Śaiva cult of the Siddha Nāthas. The *Matśya purāṇa* calls Śrisailam as the *Siddha-kṣētra*. Ālampūr and Tripurāntakam, the western and eastern gateways respectively of Śrisailam were also centres of the Siddha cult. Evidently in the Brahmēśvara temple of Ālampūr there found certain mystic symbols. Besides, the ceilings of Ālampūr temples contain the *Kuṇḍalini* sculptures, which are obviously of *Yōgic* significance³⁷. Besides, this place is also considered to be one of the *Śakti-pīthas* and Bhramaramba as one of the eighteen Śaktis³⁸. White in his work *The Alchemical Body*, states that Āndhra country (Śrīparvata-Śrisailam) as the cradle of the alchemical art in India; when the Māhēśvara Siddhas begin to appear in the 10th century, the magical alchemy became transmuted into *Tāntric* and Siddha alchemy³⁹. This place is considered to be a great Śaiva centre where several *yōgins* and Siddhas used to practice penance and the flow of pilgrims steadily increased even by the time of Śaṅkarāchārya's visit to the place, during the early part of the 6th century C.E. To some extent, it is also referred as the nucleus for all the Śaiva religious activities in those days. All the Śiva temples in Karnāṭaka and Āndhra were controlled by the presiding pontiffs of the *Mathas* at Śrisailam⁴⁰. The principal seats of *Śakti* worship in Āndhra are Śrisailam⁴¹ and

³⁶ B.S.L. Hanumantha Rao, *Religion in Āndhra*, Hyderabad, 1993, p. 291

³⁷ *Ibid.* Generally, Śrisailam is considered as one of the greatest Śaiva pilgrim centres in south India. It is situated on a flat top of the Nallamalai hills in Kurnūl district of Āndhra Pradesh. The presiding deity of this holy shrine of Śrisailam is the god Śiva called Mallikārjuna and his consort known as Bhramaramba. It is believed that the *līṅga* in this temple is a self-emanated one, and also regarded to be one of the twelve *jyōthirlīṅgas*.

³⁸ P.V. Parabrahma Sastry, *Op.cit.*, p.1

³⁹ David Gordon White, *Op.cit.*, p.77.

⁴⁰ P.V. Parabrahma Sastry, *Op.cit.*, pp.14-15, 35.

⁴¹ The *Kubjikamata Tantra* copied between the 6th and 7th Centuries C.E enumerates five *Śakti Pīthas*: *Oḍiyāna* in Orissa, *Jāla* in Jalandhara in Punjab, *Purāna* in Maharashtra, *Mātaṅga* in Śrisailam in Āndhra and *Kāmākhyā* in Assam. See R. S. Sharma, *Early Medieval Indian Society: A Study of*

Ālampūr. Bhramarāmbā and Jogulāmbā of the respective places are among the ‘Eighteen’ *Śaktis* of India.

The Siddhas, Kāpālikās, Kālamukhas, Pāsūpathas, Ārādhyas and Vīraśaivas are most prominent sects which highly enjoyed the royal patronage in Śrisailam. Śrisailam became a suitable resort for those Siddhas. There found several literary evidences starting from 7th century, and the Jain works of 11th century, mentioning about the Siddhas of Śripārvata (Śrisailam). As mentioned earlier, a small label inscription in early 7th century characters found on the rocky floor on the way to the Sāraṅgadhāra *matha* found with the word ‘*Sa ra sa pa ra mā tma*’. An ordinary *Sādhu* or *bairagi* cannot be called a *Paramātmā*, and only a man possessing divine or *yōgic* powers, bears this name. The prefix ‘*Sarasa*’ may denote the art of ‘*Rasa Viḍyā*’. (The same label inscription is also noticeable at Ālampūr temple complex). Further, the *Agnipurāṇa* also describes Śrisailam as *Siddha-kṣētra*, which indicates that this cult flourished here even in the 4th-5th centuries. As mentioned earlier, the *Nava Nātha Charitra*, a Telugu work by Gaurana of the 15th century is a story of the nine Nāthas, which was written at the instance of Mukti Sāntarāya, the spiritual head of the Bhikṣa Vritti Matha at Śrisailam. This work also describes in detail the visits of Gōrakṣanātha, Allamāprabhu and Atrēya to Śrisailam. Atrēya is said to have set up a *Rasayōga* laboratory in a cave near *Pātālagāṅga*. Gaurana cleverly connects Allamāprabhu of the 12th century with Gōrakṣanātha Siddha of about the 14th century C.E. At first this work was originally written by one Śrigiri once and Gaurana in the second instance. Here the latest and the earliest faiths of Śaivism at Śrisailam are purposely brought together to convince the readers that Vīraśaivism is not different from Siddha Śaivism.

The rectangular stone panels on the four lengthy walls of the great *prakāra* of Śrisailam contain a variety of stories, legends, epics and traditions in the form of low-relief sculptures. They also contain a variety of *tāntric* representations such as *Yōgic* exercises, sexual scenes and more importantly the representations of Nātha-Siddhas. According to tradition preserved in the Mackenzie Manuscripts this wall was constructed by one Liṅgayya in *Saka* 1334 i.e., 1412 C.E. The *prakāra* sculpture is in typical Vijayanagara style of the 15th-16th centuries. In every respect it is similar to the

Feudalisation, Orient Longman, Delhi, 2001, p. 247. The lists of Eighteen *Śakti Pīthas* are as many as on today.

sculpture of Hazara Rāma temple built by Kṛṣṇadēvarāyā at Hampi⁴², thus containing the early forms of the Vijayanagara Art.

Nātha Siddha Cult in Karnāṭaka

Karnāṭaka, a multi-religious land located in the northern part of South India is also familiar for the age-old Nātha cult. This cult was very popular in Karnāṭaka, which seems to represent a particular phase of the Siddha cult of India. The Nātha-Siddha cult targeted against rituals and practices that sanctified inequalities and exploitation of the Brahmins. This sect is characterized by its numerous monasteries and by the large measure of its social equality, which had a tremendous influence on the Kaṇṇada country, like the Vīraśaiva movement of Karnāṭaka⁴³.

Though there are no exclusive followers of the cult in Karnāṭaka, the centres of their activity are there even now. Gōrakṣanātha and Matsyēndranātha themselves are believed to have popularised the cult in Karnāṭaka. It is believed that Gōrakṣanātha was instrumental in the codification of the *Nātha panth* by bringing together ‘twelve separate sects’ (*Bārah panthi*) in various parts of the country. None of these twelve sects had their religious or sacred centers anywhere in Peninsular India. The *Nātha sampradāya* was prevalent in the Vijayanagara Empire, particularly in the South Kanara district, with Kadire being an important centre, as well as in Āndhra, especially at Śrisailam⁴⁴. During this time, all the Śiva temples in Karnāṭaka and Āndhra were controlled by the presiding pontiffs of the *Mathas* at Śrisailam⁴⁵. *Nātha Panth mathas* are found in many parts of Karnāṭaka beginning from Handi Badganāth in Belgaum district to Kadire and Viṭṭal in *Dakṣiṇa Kaṇṇada*. Bhois of Gulbarga area are among the followers of *Nātha Panth*⁴⁶. It is also said that the name Karnēri or Kanēri-nāth is so named because he originally hailed from (Vijayanagara

⁴² K. Thimma Reddy (ed) *Srisailam: History and Culture*, Telugu University, Srisailam, 1988, p. 63.

⁴³ By the end of the 12th century, Basava, a Brahmin by birth, had refused to undergo the *upanayana* ceremony, founded the Vīraśaiva sect or the Liṅgāyats. The aims and achievements of this movement were ahead of other such sects such as the Nātha-Siddha in Karnāṭaka. See A.L. Basham, *A Cultural History of India*, OUP, Delhi, 1975, p. 279; also see Braj Ranjan Mani, *Debrahmanising History*., Delhi, 2007, pp. 166-167

⁴⁴ Anna L. Dallapiccola and Anila Verghese, *Sculpture at Vijayanagara: Iconography and Style*, Manohar, New Delhi, 1998, p. 79. (henceforth Dallapiccola)

⁴⁵ P.V. Parabrahma Sastry, *Op.cit.*, pp.14-15, 35

⁴⁶ Suryanath U. Kamath (ed.) *Gazetteer of India, Karnataka State Gazetteer, Part I*, Bangalore, Government of Karnāṭaka, 1982, 427-428.

in) Karnāṭaka or Kanara⁴⁷. Regarding the *Nātha Pantha* of Karnāṭaka, White states that, ‘although no one of the twelve modern sub-sects of the *Nātha Sampradāya* appears to ever have been based in Karnāṭaka, the ancient and prestigious monastery of Kadri, located on “Jōgi Hill” on the northern outskirts of Maṅalore, is a permanent fixture of Nāthism, and it is the founding lineage of the abbots of this monastery that is recorded in this inscription⁴⁸. The Siddhas/Nāthas in other parts of the subcontinent are nine in number⁴⁹ and this *nava nātha* cult was one of the important facets of popular medieval religion of India. This cult is also centered in the surrounding suburbs of Bangalore which is revealed by the sculptures found in the pillars of Ulsūr Somēśvara temple, in Kalāsipālayam Jalakāṇṭhēśvara temple, and in Kōṭē Veṅkataramana Sāmy temple. Besides, similar sculptures are also found in the temples at Hampi, Nandhi, Nandhi-beta, Āvani, Naṅjungudu and also in the temples found around the Mysore region.

Siddha Cult in Tamiḷnādu

Besides the main stream *bhakti* tradition in Tamiḷnādu, there was a group of Tamiḷ Śaiva poets who were much closer to the Kaṇṇada-speaking Vīraśaivas in spirit and who, unlike the Vīraśaivas, remained on the fringes of society. Traditionally, these poets, known as Siddhas or *cittars* in Tamiḷ are said to be eighteen in number. While the tradition claims great antiquity, most of these poets probably lived no earlier than the 17th century on the Tamiḷ Cittar tradition⁵⁰.

There are many Siddha-centres all over the Tamiḷnādu. The temples in Tamiḷnādu contain the sculptures depicting the *Tāntric* rites and the images of the venerated Siddhas in it. However, the history of the Siddhas of South India, particularly Tamiḷnādu, have played a conspicuous part has become almost a forgotten chapter and no Tamiḷ scholar has so far come forward to examine their achievements which were mostly miraculous in character, nor their great services in

⁴⁷ See David Gordon White, *Op.cit*, pp.396-397 (n72).

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p.94; see also G. W. Briggs, *Gōrakhnāth and Kānpata Yogis*, p.58;

⁴⁹ There is a controversy about the Nava Nātha list which often varies in names and many scholars identified separate lists based on their own observations.

⁵⁰ Norman J. Cutler, *Songs of Experience: The Poetics of Tamil Devotion*, Indiana University Press, USA, 1987.

medicine and *yōga*⁵¹. The spread of this cult in Tamil region is ambiguous. However, there are many literary compilations in Tamil like *Tirumandiram* of Tirumūlar, *Tiruppugal* of Aruṇagiri, and collections of the songs of individual Siddhas like Śivavākkiyar, Pāmbāṭṭi, Paṭṭiṇaṭṭār, Itaikātar, Kaduveli Siddhar etc., which facilitated the spread of this cult to every nook and corner of the Tamil land. On the other hand, *tāntric* modes of worship are also taking place in various temples of medieval period. Besides, starting from the Cōla period to the post Vijayanagara period and beyond, *tāntric* sculptures were occupied the parts of the temples in its pillars and *gōpurās*, *maṇḍapas*, etc. As a testimony of existence of this cult and patron rendered to it by royal authorities also revealed in the inscribed records issued by the respective rulers of the Tamil region. Even today, the famous pilgrim centres all which located in the hilly regions like Tiruvaṇṇamalai, Parvathamalai, Maruthamalai, Veḷḷiaṅgiri, Kollimalai, Kaṇjamalai, Saduragiri, Paḷaṇi, Poṇṇimalai, Kaṇṇivādi, Kasavaṇapaṭṭi, Tiruvakkarai, Mailam, Mēlmaruvattūr, etc. are also celebrated as a great centres of Siddha worship in Tamilnādu.

Siddha Cult in Puducherry⁵²

Puducherry is a spiritual, peaceful and secular territory in which all sorts of religious people are living. It is a traditional land of learning and wisdom, as indicated by its name ‘*Vēdapuram* or *Vēdapuri*’ for its *Vēdic* culture. Evidently, one can witness numerous temples dedicated to various deities. Besides that, is said to be one of the greatest *Siddha Kṣētras*, where many Siddhas lived and performed their miracles and also attained their *Samādhi*. Among them Swāmy Siddhānantha, Mahān Badē Sāhib, Sri Aurobindo, etc. are still celebrated as great Siddhas. It is believed that even today those great Siddhas and Saints are living in this place in various forms. In relation to these Siddhas, there are many folk tales and legends popularly spread over the region. For instance, it is glorified in a local tradition that, Gōrakṣa stayed and performed ‘*Tapa*’ and attained ‘*Siddhi*’ at Kōrkādu village of Puducherry, therefore the village is named after him as ‘Kōrakar Kādu’ and later come to the current corrupted form ‘Kōrkādu’.

⁵¹ V. Ramachandra Dikshitar, *Op.cit*, p. 162

⁵² Puducherry as a political entity appears only after 16th century, but was a part of ancient Tamilāgam (Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam), Bāhūr (Vāhūr) in this region is having the Pallava copper plate inscription describing it as *Vēdapuri*.

But prior to this, the *tāntric* cult in art form is found in almost all medieval temples of Puduchērry, viz., Bāhūr, Madagadipattu, Tirubuvanai, Tiruvaṇḍārkōil. For instance, on the pillars of the *mahāmaṇḍapa* of Śrī Mūlanāthar temple of Bāhūr there are many mid-relief sculptures of Matsyēndranātha, Vyālinātha, Bhairava, *yōgic* postures, representation of *Bhairavi Cakra*. Besides, few other sculptures of the *tāntric* rites are also found in the Madagadipattu Śrī Kuṇḍāṅkuḷi Mahādēvar temple, Tiruvaṇḍārkōil Śrī Pañcanadī śvara temple.

Among the temples of Puduchērry, Villianūr Tirukāmēśvara temple remains as the most prominent remnant of Vijayanagara rule in the region⁵³. In the Tirukāmēśvara temple of Villianūr, large numbers of such *tāntric* sculptures are depicted with fine craftsmanship. On pillar reliefs, are found the sculptures of Mīṇanātha (seated on a fish), Gōrakṣanātha (seated on a tiger) and Vyālinātha (seated on a mythical creature known as *Vyāli*) and other such six sculptures of the Navanātha group. Besides them, many *tāntric* images representing the cult of *Bhairavi cakra*⁵⁴, and images depicting various *yōga sādhanās* of Nātha-Siddhas were largely found in different parts of the temple which are datable to the Vijayanagara period.

The word *Siddham*

If the Siddhas can be identified from the early medieval period, the evolution of their philosophical tenets seems to have a much earlier beginning. According to *Śvētaśvatara Upaniṣad*, the Siddhas are those who possessed from birth the “superhuman” powers, as also of “knowledge and indifference to the world”⁵⁵. *Vāyu Purāṇa* also describes Siddhas by grouping⁵⁶ them with *Devarīṣis*, *Pannagas*, *Yakṣas*,

⁵³ The presiding deity, *Kāmēśvara*, was installed during the early Cōla period. Except the *Garbhagriha*, all structural additions of this temple belong to the Vijayanagara and post Vijayanagara period.

⁵⁴ “The worship of Śakti is centered chiefly in mystic circle known as *Bhairavī Tantra*. It is otherwise called *Cakrapūjā*, in which there was free and unrestricted use of liquor, meat and woman. In Rajasekhara’s play *Karpūramañjari*, the master magician, Bhairavānanda declares that he is an adherent of the *Kaula* way, drinks with and enjoys women and so goes forward to salvation. The *Kaulācāryas* did not observe any restrictions regarding food, drink and caste. In the *Bhairavi Cakra* or the circle of *Bhairavi* where *Kaulas* gathered to worship Śakti, all castes were admitted, meat of every sort excepting perhaps beef was allowed, and every worshipper was required to contract a marriage which was to last to the end of the gathering. In the literature of medieval Āndhra, we come across terms like *Bhairavaitantra*, *Bhairavayogini* and *Yoginicaakra*”. B.S.L. Hanumantha Rao, *Op.cit*, p. 292.

⁵⁵ K.V. Ramakrishna Rao, *A Critical Study of the Chronology of Siddhas*, <http://www.Hinduwebsite.com/hinduism/essays/siddhas.asp>. he quoted from *Śvētaśvatara Upaniṣad*, Chapter I, Verses, 3, 5, 7

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, quoted from *Vāyu Purāṇa*, Chapter 41, verses 66-73

Gandharvas, Kinnaras etc. The *kēsin* referred to in the *Rg Vēda* is very similar to Siddhas.

In the early centuries of Christian era, it became customary to use the Prakrit word *siddham* (meaning ‘successes or ‘successful’) or its abbreviations at the beginning of an inscription or in the left margin⁵⁷. The word *siddham* often stands by itself on the margin and the *Svaṣṭika* appears after the word *siddham*⁵⁸. Sometimes, the word *siddham* or its symbol was followed by one or more verses in praise of various deities. These auspicious symbols appear for first time in the Nāsik Cave inscription of the time of the Sātavāhana king Kṛṣṇa and in the Hathigumphā inscription of Khāravēla, belonging to the last quarter of the first century B.C. and the beginning of the first century C.E.

With the expansion of the Gupta Empire, the currency of ‘*siddham*’ extended over the entire North and the East of India. The word ‘*siddham*’ had an equivalent symbol - ‘ॐ’ - and frequently both the word and the symbol were used together⁵⁹. This formula (*siddham*) became so respectable and widely current that it still survives in the orthodox style of even private letters addressed to a superior.

In the inscriptions, invocations were addressed to the God, deities, *Tīrthāṅkarās*, *Buddhas*, *Arhats*, *Siddhas*, saints etc. in order to seek their presence as a witness to the deeds executed in the records and to pray for their help and blessings for the successful completion of the undertakings⁶⁰. The earliest invocation occurs in the Hathigumphā cave inscription of Khāravēla in the following simple form: *Namo arhantanam* (salutation to the *Arhats*) and *namo savasiddhanam* (salutation to all the *Siddhas*). The Mandasor Stone Inscription of the Sātavāhanas and the Kṣāharatas found at Junar, Mahad, Kud, Karle, Shelarwadi, and Nasik of the time of Kumaragupta II (C.E. 436 and C.E. 473) contains a long and glowing invocation to

⁵⁷ Richard Salomon, *Indian Epigraphy: A Guide to the Study of Inscriptions in Sanskrit, Prakrit and the other Indo-Aryan Languages*, Munshiram Manoharlal, 1998, pp.67-68

⁵⁸ G. Buhler, *Indian Epigraphy: From About B.C.350 to About C.E. 1300*, Eastern Book House, Patna, 1987, pp. 108-109.

⁵⁹ It was used like that in the Mathura Stone Inscription of the time of Huviṣka. For further details see *Epigraphia Indica*, (henceforth *EI*), Vol. XXI, pp.60f.

⁶⁰ Raj Bali Pandey, *Indian Paleography* (Part I) Motilal Banarasidas, Varanasi, 1957, p.149.

the Sun and the Siddhas⁶¹. Similarly at Aracchalur⁶² of South Tamilnādu, an inscription with Brāhmi characters was found. The first letter of the first line begins with a circle and dot inside it. This indicates *tha* in the Brāhmi script. However, here this represents the word like *maṅgala* or *siddham*. Scholars like M. Raju, Seeni Venkataswami, Sri Pal and T.V. Mahalingam dates this inscription as 3rd or 4th century C.E⁶³.

The word *Siddhar* is found in the literary work *Tirumandiram*⁶⁴. The Siddhar of this period is entirely different from the Siddhar of the later period in different aspects. However, the word is not found in the *Nikaṇḍus*⁶⁵, except *Piṅgalanthai*⁶⁶. Evidently such group must have originated only after the *Nikaṇḍu* period i.e. 13th-14th centuries. Even *Agarāthi*, *Abidhana*, *Vadamālai nikaṇḍus* of 19th century too do not mention the word ‘*Siddhar*’. However, the word *Siddham* is used to denote Śiva and as well as Buddha. Besides, the word, *Siddham* denoting to knowledge is used only once in *Paripādal*⁶⁷. Therefore, Ramakrishna Rao⁶⁸ opined that the nomenclature Siddha, Siddha literature, Siddha system of medicine etc, are of later origin perhaps belonging to 17th – 19th centuries.

⁶¹ “May the Sun, the cause of the origin and destruction of the world, protect you – who is worshipped by the hosts of gods for the sake of their maintenance and by the Siddhas who wish for higher accomplishments (and) by having the objects of their desire under their control as they long for liberation and by sages practicing with devotion strict penances, who are able to curse or to offer blessings”. See *ibid*, pp.150-153.

⁶² A village in Erode district of Tamilnādu lies in the Erode - Kāṅgēyam road, about 12 miles from the Erode town. There is a low lying hill called Nāgamalai near the village which contains a natural cavern at the height of about 60 feet from the surrounding area. It is locally called Āṇḍippārai. In this are found three rock beds with inscriptions.

⁶³ T.V. Mahalingam, *Early South Indian Paleography*, University of Madras, Madras, 1974, pp.290-7

⁶⁴ There are different opinions among the date of *Tirumandiram* and its author Tirumūlar. Scholars, so far assigned different dates. Presently it varies from 3000 BCE to 4th/5th Centuries CE.

⁶⁵ The lexicographical books in Tamil are called *Nikaṇḍus*. The first full-fledged lexicon in Tamil is *Divākaram* of Divākarar.

⁶⁶ *Piṅgalanthai*, 92. *Piṅgalanthai* is the second *Nikaṇḍu*. It is more elaborate than *Divākaram*. M. Arunachalam dates Piṅgalar to 900-1000 C.E. see M. Arunachalam, *An Introduction to the History of Tamil Literature*, Gandhi Vidyalayam, Tiruchitrambalam, 1974, p.342

⁶⁷ *Paripādal* is one of the eight works of *Saṅgam* literature which is classified as *Eṭṭuttohai* or eight anthologies. It contains only musical pieces. Out of the traditional 70 songs, only 22 songs have survived which give the names of 13 composers and 10 musicians. The songs are composed on Muruga, Tirumāl, the Vaigai and the city of Madurai. *Paripādal* is dated between 100 and 200 C.E. See M. Arunachalam, *op.cit*, pp.39, 56 and 341.

⁶⁸ K.V. Ramakrishna Rao, *Op.cit*.

Siddhas, Siddhar and Cittar

The terms *Siddhas*, *Siddhar*, *Sittar* and *Cittar* were variously used by the Western and Indian scholars, but each of them has specific connotation in Tamil. *Siddhar* means perfected or realized saint. *Sittar* implies an expert in occultism, alchemy and so on with magic or superstitious power. *Cittar* also connotes the same however exhibiting such powers with mind. It may be noted that the differentiation arises due to the understanding and interpretation of the Tamil words *siddhu* (miracle, supernatural performance, etc.) and *cittu* (connected with mind and mental powers). In this work the word ‘*Siddha*’ is used for the group of saintly people, who flourished between 14th to 19th centuries. Incidentally, they coincide with their Sanskrit counterparts⁶⁹. The *Lexicon of Tamil Literature* defines that the term *Cittar* as derived from the Sanskrit word ‘*Siddha*’ which means miraculous, supernatural, magic power. It has a vague designation of at least three groups of Tamil authors known as alchemists or physicians who composed in Tamil vast literature in prose and verse⁷⁰.

The *Tiruvāvaduturai Purāṇam* speaks of the Siddhas as those who are rich in knowledge⁷¹. According to *Vāṇmīki cūttira ṇāṇam* 3, “by purifying the mind and attaining perfection one becomes a *cittaṇ* (Siddha). He is indeed fit to be called Śiva”⁷². Tiruvalluvar in his *Tirukkuraḷ* refers to the Siddhas by the word *Aṟivar*. The *Aṟivar* or the *Aṟavōr* were in all probability the people described by the *Tirukkuraḷ* as ‘*Nīttār*’ or ‘those who have renounced’. Chapter 3 of *Kuraḷ* itself named as ‘*Nīttār Perumai*’ means ‘The Greatness of Ascetics’. All the ten verses (couplets) of this chapter are dedicated to the ascetics, those who are renounced. It says that,

*The settled rule of every code
Requires, as highest good,
Their greatness who, renouncing all
true to their rule have stood*⁷³.

⁶⁹ *Cit* = the principle of universal intelligence or consciousness; *Citta* = mind-stuff; sub-conscious mind; *Siddh* = realised, perfected, thus, *Siddha* is a perfected yogi; *Siddhi* = perfection, attainment, psychic power; *Siddhānta* = established tenet or doctrine. Swami Sivananda, *Yoga Vedanta Dictionary*, Rishikesh, 1950, pp. 33, 89

⁷⁰ Kamil V. Zvelebil, *Lexicon of Tamil Literature*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1995, pp. 165-66

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² *cīrantu maṇat teḷivāṅic cērntōn ciṭṭaṇ, civaciva avaṇavaṇeṇ ṛuraikkālāmē*. Quoted by Kamil V. Zvelebil, *The Smile of Murugan on Tamil Literature of South India*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1973, p. 225

⁷³ *Tirukkuraḷ*, G.U. Pope, (Trans.), Tamil University, Thanjavur, 1988, *Nīttār Perumai*, (chapter III), verse. 1

Further, the *Kuṛaḷ* says that the *nīttār* (ascetics) set an example to the world.

*The might of men whose word
is never vain,
The 'secret word' shall
to the earth proclaims*⁷⁴.

One of the *Saṅgam* literary works, *Tolkāppiyam* refers to the Siddhas as *aṛivar*. They were supposed to know the past, the present and the future⁷⁵. Saint Tirumūlar himself says in his work *Tirumandiram*, that those who live in *Yōga* and see the divine power and light through *Yōga* are the Siddhas. He is an experimental *yōgin* who attains perfection by the method of self-effort. As *yōgins*, the Siddhas are said to have the triple control-the control of breath, the control of the passions and desires and the control of mind. A Siddha is one who has succeeded in stabilizing these controls in oneself and one who maintains equanimity and a sense of equilibrium. He also defines the Siddhas are those 'who have experienced divine light (*oli*) and divine power (*catti*, Skt. *śakti*) from within and through *Yōgic Samādhi*'⁷⁶.

Tirumūlar presents a clear definition of the Siddhas: "*Impeccable, Immaculate Ones, Siddhas are they that have "gone thither" –beyond good and evil; they have reached the very shores of knowledge; the Siddhas are ever free even as Śiva himself! Cooled and composed are their "fires" indeed! "Blessed Immortals, Holy Virgins, liberated from the action-influence of the thirty-six Tattvas. Siddhas are they who have arrived at the City of God (Śiva) here and now! Discovered have they within themselves the Logos and their original-fount where they are ultimately resolved!" "Siddhas are they who have realised Śiva, realised the Eternal Gnosis! Siddhas are indeed the "transfigured ones;" of the White Brotherhood, and harmonised to*

⁷⁴ *Tirukkuraḷ*, *Nīttār Perumai*, (chapter III), Verse 8, (Kuṛaḷ-28)

⁷⁵ 'Maruvil mūvahaikkālamum neṟiyin Āṛṛiya Aṛivar' (one who knows the past, present and future) *Tolkāppiyam*, Porul Athikāram, verse. 75; N. Subrahmanian, *Saṅgam Polity*, Ennes Publications, Madurai, 1980, p. 275. V. Ramachandra Dikshitar says, "a *siddha* was an inspired seer who had a vision to read not only the past and the present, but who could also read the future. He is ordinarily called a *Siddha Vaidyan* even to-day" T.N. Ganapathy (2003), *The Yoga of Siddha Boganathar*, p.2

⁷⁶ *Tirumandiram*, Verse No. 1463 (*Yōga samādhiyin uḷḷē yakalitam; Yōga samādhiyin uḷḷē yūlarōli; Yōga samādhiyin uḷḷē yūlaśakti; Yōga samādhi yukantavar cittarē Tirumandiram*) and 1490; see T. N. Ganapathy, (2003), *Op.cit.*, p.2; and also Kamil V. Zvelebil, (1973), *Op.cit.*, p. 225; see also David Gordon White, *The Alchemical Body*, *Op.cit.*, p.61.

the rhythm of the Divine Creative Movement, they ever belong to the Land of the Celestials”⁷⁷.

From Tirumūlar’s point of view, the life of a true Siddha is the life of perfect harmony. In it all contradictions and contrasting dualities or multiplicities lose their sharp edges and are harmonised, unified and synthesized as integral aspects of the one Life; absolute freedom from all tensions—from physical limitations caused as it were by the body-configuration of dense corporeal form, from the oppressive sense of duty born of morality as conceived by the public, as obtaining in the lower, lesser unevolved planes of existence, the commonplace morals of good and evil, the many do’s and don’ts, freedom even from the tension involved in “knowledge,” constituted as it is of the subject-object relations and therefore, resting for their very existence on the “categories”—for, the Siddhas have “gone thither” and reached the shores of Knowledge⁷⁸.

*Siddhas are those who have seen civam.
Though coming into contact with śuddha –aśuddha (māyās)
They are not subjected to their influence.
They are liberated; they are also the source of liberation
They are an embodiment of energy residing in the mūlādhāra
They partake of the nature of Sadāśiva⁷⁹.*

“A Siddha is one who has realized” the non-duality of *jīva* (the psyche) and Śiva. He is one who has realized Śiva in himself. He is said to have attained *Śivānubhava*. *Śivānubhava* stands for the state of experiencing the non-duality or oneness between the experiencing *jīva* and Śiva⁸⁰.

The Siddhas are the great human teachers who attained *aṣṭasiddhis*⁸¹ (powers) through their *yōgic* practices. These eight supernatural powers of the Siddhas are also

⁷⁷ S.A. Sarma, *Tamil Siddhas: A Study from Historical, Socio-Cultural and Religio-Philosophical Perspectives*, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 2007, pp. 25-26

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ *Tirumandiram* – 2526. For English version see Maithily Thayanithy, *The Concept of Living Liberation in the Tirumantiram*, Ph.D Thesis, Centre for the Study of Religion, University of Toronto, 2010, p. 36.

⁸⁰ T.N. Ganapathy, (2003), *Op.cit.*, p.2

⁸¹ The *aṣṭasiddhis* are 1. *Anima* (power of becoming the size of an atom and entering into smallest life), 2. *Mahima* (power of becoming mighty and co-extensive with the universe), 3. *Laghima* (capacity to be light though big in size), 4. *Garima* (capacity to be heavy though seeming small in size), 5. *Prapthi* (capacity to enter all the worlds), 6. *Prakāmyam* (power of transmutation and enjoying what he wants), 7. *Isithvam* (having the creative power of god and control over the heavenly elements), and 8.

elaborately described in the ‘*Siddhar Kaṇam*’ of Saint Tāyumāṇavar. He had sung nearly ten songs, in which many of the names of the Siddhas are mentioned by him⁸². These *Siddhis* are powers either attained by birth (as the result of previous merit, earlier positive *karma*), or by alchemical means, by power of words (*mantra*), or by mortification coupled with proper training and thorough concentration. However, a true Siddha is supposed to overcome the temptation of these *Siddhis*⁸³.

Mircea Eliade says that the Siddhas are those ‘who understood liberation as the conquest of immortality’⁸⁴. While defining the Tamil Siddhas and their poetries, M. Arunachalam said that, “Generally the Cittar were persons of mystic experience who sang of such experience, who spoke in a popular language of that experience. Their mystic expression is often obscure”⁸⁵.

According to Kamil V. Zvelebil, “A Siddha or Mahāsiddha is an *yōgin* who has acquired siddha, that is, ‘power, prowess, strength, ability’. From the technique of acquiring such power or powers, and from the description of these powers, it is obvious that the ‘power’ or ‘powers’ meant are occult, miraculous, supernatural, magic; that is, extraordinary abilities which normal man, a non-Siddha, does not possess”⁸⁶. He also says that the designation ‘*Siddha*’ is also a name of a sect in North India partly synonymous with *Nātha*⁸⁷ and in Buddhism it denotes a class of saints who have attained *Siddhi* or perfection in *Tāntric* rites. In Jainism, this term is equivalent to the designation *tīrthāṅkara*⁸⁸. However, in the context of South Indian Tamil culture, the Siddhas (*cittar*) are those who have attained the eight great supernatural powers (*aṣṭasiddhis*), use their achievement in medical cure and/or alchemy, and express their views and doctrine in prose and verse composed in Tamil.

Vasithvam (power of attracting others or control over kings and gods). T.N. Ganapathy (2004), *Op.cit.*, p. 15; also see N.N. Bhattacharyya, *Op.cit.*, p. 280

⁸² *Tāyumāṇavar Pāṭalkaḷ*, (Hymns of Tāyumāṇavar:in Tamil, Dharmapura Āthinam Edition, 1965, verses 57-66.

⁸³ K.V. Zvelebil, *The Poets of the Powers*, London, 1973, p.60

⁸⁴ Mircea Eliade, *Op.cit.*, p. 302

⁸⁵ M. Arunachalam, ‘Literary Heritage – Medieval Period’, in S.V. Subramanian and V. Veerasami (eds.), *Cultural Heritage of the Tamils*, International Institute of Tamil Studies, Madras, 1981, p. 19.

⁸⁶ K.V. Zvelebil, *Op.cit.*, 1973, p.60

⁸⁷ The term *Nātha* literally means ‘lord’. Here often used to denote the saints/*yōgis* of the *Tāntrik* cult, particularly in Northern India; See B. Walker, *Hindu world*, London, 1968, Vol. 2, p.128.

⁸⁸ *Tīrthāṅkara*, the usual name of the 24 salvation-preachers or chief saints of Jainism of whom the last (Mahāvīra) was a historical person.

K.A.N. Sastry claims that the Tamil Sittars (the Perfected Ones) and their teachings may well have been the outcome of Muslim and Christian influences in Hindu thought and practice⁸⁹. M.S. Purnalingam Pillai notes that alchemical transmutation was their main achievement. He claims that the Siddha School of medicine and healing consisting of *maṇi*, *mantra* and *ausadha*, has been proved to be far earlier than the Sanskrit *Āyurvēdic* tradition of medicine. He further notes that Itaikkādar, another Siddha and friend of Tiruvaḷḷuvar, was present at the siege of Karur by the Cōḷa king Kiḷḷi Vaḷavan. He was a contemporary of Kulaśekhara Pāṇḍyan and friend of Kapilar. Itaikaḷi Nadu was probably his native land⁹⁰.

Rev. Caldwell in his *Comparative Grammar of Dravidian Languages* classifies Tamil Siddhars as belonging to the anti-Brahminical school. He finds Christian influence in the writings of the Siddhas, implying that the term *aṇbu* or Love is to be found only in Christian teachings. Caldwell holds that the Siddha Koṇkaṇar came from the neighbourhood of Goa, where such Christian influence is to be found; but Rahul Sankirtayan in a list maintains that one Koṇkaṇapāda alias Koṇkalipa was a *Sūdra* from Magadha country⁹¹. Caldwell's cursory mention of Siddhas⁹² is clearly distinguished by an uncharacteristic casualness, which together with his Christian bias, results in a distortion of historical perspective and a lack of insight into the original works, such of these studies to date seems based more on hearsay than on honest evaluation of their teachings.

Thus, from the above sources, a Siddha may be defined as a person who has attained divinity and achieved a state of spiritual enlightenment or mystical self-realisation. He is a complete one, fulfilled and accomplished; a God-realised being alive in the world for the sake of mankind and all living beings⁹³. In fact, all *yōgins* who attained 'perfection' can be called Siddhas; but the term Siddhas (Tamil *Cittar*)

⁸⁹ K.A.N. Sastry, *Development of Religion in South India*, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1992, p. 95-96.

⁹⁰ M.S. Purnalingam Pillai, *Tamil Literature*, Tamil University, Thanjavur, 1985, pp. 262-265

⁹¹ S.A. Sarma, *Op.cit*, p. 25

⁹² Rev. Caldwell, *Comparative Grammar of Dravidian Languages*, Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, New Delhi, 1974.

⁹³ T.N. Ganapathy, (2004), *Op.cit.*, p.13

is indeed derived from the term *Siddhi* or ‘miraculous, magical power’, and hence the perfection in question is primarily magical perfection⁹⁴.

Characteristic Features of the Tamil Siddhas

In the Tamil region, the origin of the Siddha cult is not authentically dated but can be related to the earliest form of Śaivism i.e, the Pāśupata School of Śaivism. It evolved along different lines but parallel to *āgamic* Śaivism, to the extent of their leading exponent Tirumūlar of the 8th century C.E. being accepted as one of the 63 Śaiva saints (Nāyaṇmārs)⁹⁵. The Siddhars on the other hand had an older origin and a vast following in Tamilnādu. They were mainly Śaivites as the *Tirumantiram* and other Siddhar writings will show.

The eclectic school of mystics who often in addition to their opposition to the degenerate religion made fun of the outward formalities became popular as Siddhas in Tamil land. These siddhas are probably to be identified with worshippers of the *nirguṇa* Brahman. They believed in *yōga* and *tantra* as well as in medicine for the suffering humanity. Here their religious mysticism becomes one with ethical mysticism. The eclectic school is very old in Tamil land with its relationship with *Tāntric* schools of Śaivism, the Nātha pantha and other such religious sects of India⁹⁶.

T.N. Gaṇapathy extracted the essences from the songs of the Tamil Siddhars and gives a detailed description of characteristic features of the Tamil Siddhas. He states that, “A characteristic feature of the Tamil Siddha is his declaration of the oneness of man with God. Tirumūlar says that for a man with a clear vision that is for Siddha *jīva* is Śiva. He is a Siddha who sees Śiva in every *jīva*”. Another notable feature that we find among the Tamil Siddhas is the total absence of any local cult of the deity. They are not believers in one local deity. No genuine Siddha in Tamilnādu including Tirumūlar, has sung in praise of any local deity or God or personal God. This is a feature that distinguishes Siddhas from other Saints, especially Ālvārs and

⁹⁴ K. V. Zvelebil, *Op.cit*, 1973, p.27

⁹⁵ N. Subrahmanian, *The Tamils: Their History, Culture and Civilisation*, Institute of Asian Studies, Madras, 1996, p. 107

⁹⁶ T.P. Meenakshisundaran, *Papers on Linguistics and Literature*, Annamalai University, Annamalai Nagar, 1965, pp. 121-22

Nāyaṇmārs⁹⁷. According to Śivavākkīyar, a Siddha does not worship any deity in the temple⁹⁸. Pāmbāṭṭiccittar also says that those who have built temples for local Gods and have offered prayers are those who do not get at the feet of the real Lord⁹⁹. Probably the Tamil Siddhas did not worship any deity or go to temples just to dissociate themselves from the *vāmācāra* tradition. *Tēvāram* makes a distinction between a *bhakta* and a *Siddha* and says that a man who is making a sincere attempt to seek God is a *bhakta* and a man who has attained and understood Godhead is a *Siddha*¹⁰⁰. According to Paṭṭiṇattār, a Siddha is one who roams like a ghost, who rests like a dead body, who eats like a dog whatever is offered by way of food, who moves like a fox, who respects all women as his mother, who treats everyone as a friend, and who is like a child¹⁰¹. All the Tamil Siddhars were described as masters of *Yōgic* exercises, *Aṣṭa siddhis*, performers of miracles and some of them are praised as expert doctors of Siddha medicine.

Their Number

In the pan-Indian context, the number of Nātha Siddhas is standardized as nine. But the names of the nine nāthas (*navanāthas*) vary significantly from region to region indifferent textual descriptions. In the Tamil region the nine ‘cittars’ are worshipped besides the more popular eighteen Siddhars (*Pathinēn Siddhar*)¹⁰². They are Karūr Siddhar, Pulippāṇi Siddhar, Pāmbāṭṭi Siddhar, Kuthambai Siddhar, and Ahappēi Siddhar. Agasthiyar, Pulasthiyar, Tēraiyyar, Yūkimuṇi, Macchamuṇi,

⁹⁷ T.N. Ganapathy, (2004) *Op.cit.*, p.19

⁹⁸ *Aṇṭarkōṇ iruppitam aṇṭuṇarṇtha ṇānikaḷ; paṇḍarṇtha pāṇmaithannai yār aṇiya vallarō? viṇḍavēdap pōrulaiyaṇṇi vēṇṇukūṇa vagaiyilak; kaṇḍakōvil dēivamenṇu kaiyēḍuppa tillaiyē : Śivavākkīyar Pāṭalkaḷ*, verse 25

⁹⁹ Like a picture of a calabash won’t work for curry; Even if they roam around in all the eight directions; They won’t attain Release; Building a temple in every land, and doing daily worship, They don’t see the Lord’s feet, dance, snake! Dance! *Pāmbāṭṭiccittar Pātal*, verse No. 94; Translation in English by David C. Buck, dance, snake! Dance!, A Writers Workshop Publication, Calcutta, 1976, p.109

¹⁰⁰ T.N. Ganapathy, (2004), *Op.cit.*, p.20

¹⁰¹ *Pēypōltirintu piṇampōḷ kiḍantitta picchaiyēllām // Nāipōḷ arundhi naripōḷ uḷṇru naṇmaṅgaiyaraith Thāipōḷ karuthi thampōḷ aṇaivarkum thalmai sollich // Sēipōḷ iruppakkaṇḍār uṇmaiṇānam tēḷintavarē. Paṭṭiṇattār Pātal-119, (Podu Pātalkaḷ- No.35)*

¹⁰² but there is no any authentic account of their works nor is there any historical material about their lives A.V. Subramania Aiyar, *The Poetry and Philosophy of the Tamil Siddhars, An Essay in Criticism*, Tirunelveli, 1957, pp. 1-2

Saṭṭaimuṇi, Nanti, Mūlar, Chandikesar, Itaikkātar, Kapilar, Pusundamuṇi, Rōmariṣi- these were of ancient times¹⁰³.

Similarly, another tradition enumerates Eighteen Tamil Cittars viz., Akattiyar, Bōgar, Kōrakkar, Kailācanātar, Caṭṭaimuṇi, Tirumūlar, Nanti, Kūṇkaṇṇar, Maccamuṇi, Vācamuṇi, Kūrmamuṇi, Kamalamuṇi, Itai kātar, Puṇṇākkīcar, Cuntarānantar, Urōmariṣi, Pīramamuṇi. Yet another tradition speaks of 9 Siddhars such as Cattiyanātar, Catōkanātar, Ātinātar, Ānātinātar, Vekulinātar, Mataṇkanātar, Maccēntiranātar, Katēntiranātar, Kōrakanātar. Often, the following semi-legendary persons like Taṇvaṇṭiri, Pulastiyar, Pucuṇṭar, Karuvūrār, Irāmatēvar, Tēraiyyar, Kapilar are also classified as Siddhars. However in Tamil literature, the following poets are also included in Siddha group namely, Akappēy, Aḷukuṇi, Civavākkiyar, Ēnāti, Itaikkātar, Kālai, Katuveli, Kutampai, Pāmbāṭṭi, Paṭṭinattār and Pattirakiri. These poets have in common unorthodox or even iconoclastic and revolutionary views and the use of, usually simple, almost colloquial diction and vigorous imagery¹⁰⁴.

However, the Tamil literary tradition contain different lists of the 18 Siddhars and even more, which might have been created due to the local conditions (See Appendix 1).

Review of Literature

A review of literature is a pre-requirement to identify research works already undertaken in the area of study; to understand different perspectives of research, in the interpretation of the siddha cult, philosophy, rituals and methods of worship. This part of the thesis presents a panoramic view of such works related to the Siddha cult in general and Tamilnādu in particular.

N. N. Bhattacharyya's¹⁰⁵ *History of the Tantric Religion*, is an erudite and scholarly masterpiece, which is a solid study of the *Tāntric* religion. A lengthy survey of Indian *tāntric* literature; external influences and interactions on *Tāntrism*; the Primitive substratum which entertains the *Vāmācāra* practices, the role of women in *Tāntric* cults, social significance of the sex rites, fertility beliefs, initiation and so on;

¹⁰³ M.S. Purnalingam Pillai, *Op.cit*, pp.262-266

¹⁰⁴ Kamil V. Zvelebil, *Op.cit*, 1995, pp. 165-66

¹⁰⁵ N. N. Bhattacharyya, *History of the Tantric Religion*, Manohar, New Delhi, 1982

Tāntrism and the earlier forms of Indian Religious systems from pre-*Vēdic*, *Vēdic* and post-*Vēdic* times; *Tāntric* Ideas and Practices in Medieval Religious systems such as the medieval Vaiṣṇavism, Southern Śaivism, Vīraśaivism, Kaśmīra Śaivism, Śāktism and the Atimārgika sects like Kāpālikas, Kālamukhas, Mattamayūras, and with the Gāṇapatyas and the Smārta Pañcopāsanā; *Tāntrism* in relation to the religion of the masses like Lokāyata tradition; the *tāntric* substratum of Śāktism, the functional aspects of the *Śākta tantras*, the *Sat-cakras* and its conceptual transformation, the deities, mantras and letters-their position in the *Cakras*, *yōgic* exercises and awakening of *Kuṇḍalini*, *Raseśvara Darśana*, the deities related to the Śākta *Tāntrism* and their philosophies were thoroughly discussed in this book.

J. N. Farquhar¹⁰⁶ in his work “*An outline of The Religious Literature of India*” gives a brief account of Sittars in a separate title. In that work he mentions about the Tamil Siddhas as follows. “There was a Śaiva school in Tamil-land, which held a monotheistic and Puritan creed, and roundly condemned idolatry. They are usually called the Chittars, or Sittars, i.e. *Siddhas*, Sages, but their history is not known. They seem to have been most active in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Ahappēy and Pāmbāṭṭi are believed to have been their chief singers. Many of the hymns of the Sittars are collected in the *Śiva-vākyam*, (Śiva’s utterances), but orthodox lyrics have also crept in beside the pure material. On the other hand, a number of beautiful lyrics which show the Sittar spirit are mistakenly attributed to Paṭṭiṇattu Piḷḷai, the tenth-century poet. Tattuva Rāyar, who wrote in the seventeenth century a work against idolatry, *Adaṅgan-Muṛai*, was probably another leader”.

The work “*Siddha-Siddhanta Paddhati and other works of the Nātha Yogis*” by Kalyani Mallik¹⁰⁷ dealt with the literary work *Siddha-Siddhanta Paddhati* of Gōrakṣanātha. This work also discussed the *Yōgavisaya* of Mīṇanātha, *Amaraugha Prabodha*, *Yōgamārtānda*, *Gōrakṣa Upaniṣad* of Gōrakṣanātha and other works like *Matśyēndraji-Ka-pada*, *Bharatharji-ki-Sabdi*, *Chirpatji-ki-Sabdi*, *Gopichandaji-ki-Sabdi* and *Jalandhari Paoji-ki-sabdi*. The above cited works are the original texts of the *Nātha Sampradaya* which are given in this book in Dēvanagiri script (Sanskrit)

¹⁰⁶ J. N. Farquhar, *An outline of The Religious Literature of India*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1984 (rep), p.352

¹⁰⁷ (Mrs) Kalyani Mallik, *Siddha-Siddhanta Paddhati and other works of the Natha Yogis*, Poona Oriental Book House, Poona, 1954.

along with the summary of the contents of the original texts with critical comments. A short history of the *Nāthapantha* is also given by the author in this work. It also includes the legends about the origin of the sect, the historicity and date of Matsyēndranāth, and Gōraknāth, Bhartrhari, Jalandhranāth, Jñānēswar and Gambhīrnāth and the historicity of Gōpichandra. The author also critically analysed the identical aspects of Matsyēndranāth, Mīṇanātha and Luipa with the help of their doctrines. The philosophical tenets of the sect and successive steps of their *Sādhana*, and also the texts belonging to the sect and their importance with its probable dates were given in detail.

The book entitled “*Mother Goddess in Indian Art, Archaeology and Literature*” by M.C.P. Srivastava¹⁰⁸, is a thesis that gives a detailed account on the cult of Mother Goddess in various places during various periods such as pre and proto-Historic period, *Vēdic* period, post-Indus and Pre-Mauryan period, Maurya-Suṅga, Kuśāna, Gupta and post-Gupta period. The book also explained the Mother Goddess in Hindu and Buddhist *Tantras*, the folk-Goddess, *tāntric* deities, *Śakti Pīthas* and rituals and festivals conducted during the worship of those Mother Goddesses. He states ‘Kālī’ as an important form of *Tāntric* Goddess and also says that *Cakrapūja* and *Pañcaṭṭava* are the important features of *tāntric* religion. This work also dealt with *Tāntric* Literature, *Tāntric Sādhana* and *Tāntric* traits.

Mircea Eliade’s “*Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*” is originally a French work entitled “*Le Yoga Immortalité et Liberté*” (1954), which was translated from French by Williard R. Trask. It is a work of formidable scholarship¹⁰⁹. This work investigated into the Indian experimental mysticism known as *Yōga*. Discussions were made on the continuity of Indian thinking through Pre-Dravidian, Dravidian, and Aryan including classical and post-classical times in Brahmanism, Hinduism and Buddhism. The author makes clear that in *yōga* and in Hindu thought, the anxiety engendered by living in time is called *karma*, thought of as a process of causality that follows one through death to endless rebirths. The author delved deep into the typically Indian polarity of thought. Freedom and Immortality are understood by the author as new birth after, or even through, death and Liberation means the negation of the former

¹⁰⁸ M.C.P. Srivastava, *Mother Goddess in Indian Art, Archaeology and Literature*, 1979

¹⁰⁹ Mircea Eliade, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*, Williard R. Trask (Trans.), Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd., London, 1958

Self-not the culmination of individualism, but the extinction of the individual. Thus, this work is a complex one, and the *yōga* which is discussed in this is entirely different from the current *yōgic* practices. In the concluding part of this seminal work Eliade brings out in a nut shell the quintessence of Indian *Yōga* as “pan-Indian corpus of spiritual techniques... a reaction against metaphysical speculation and he excesses of a fossilized ritualism....represent the same tendency toward the concrete, toward personal experience...in the popular devotion expressed in *pūjā* and *Bhakti*”.¹¹⁰

Shashibhushan Dasgupta's, '*Obscure Religious Cults*'¹¹¹ is a revised and extended work of the author's thesis. He divided this work into four parts and 14 chapters. The first part dealt with the Buddhist Sahajiya cult, its literary works, and history of Buddhism in Bengal, origin and development of *Tāntric* Buddhism and the ideas of *Mahayāna* to the *Tāntric* Buddhism; the philosophical stand point of the *carya-padas*; general religious outlook of the Sahajiyas, esoteric practices and *yōgic sādhanas* of the Sahajiyas. He dated the origin of the Nātha cult within the 9th-12th centuries C.E. and so on. In part II, the medieval Sahajiya schools such as Vaiṣṇava Sahajiya cult; the transition from Buddhist Sahajiya to Vaiṣṇava Sahajiya; its mode of transformation and *Sahaja Sādhana*; the Rasa school and Kaśmīra Śaivism; the Bāuls of Bengal, their comparison with Sahajiyas, Sūfis are discussed. In Part III, the Nātha cult was discussed. The origin of the Nātha cult, the Siddha cult, their Rasāyana schools; confusion about the Nātha Siddhas and the Buddhist Siddhācāryās, the 84 Siddhas and the Nine Nāthas were also discussed. Whether sprung ultimately from Buddhism or Śaiva Hinduism; the author takes it to represent a phase of the Siddhas, a Śaiva school. It has included quite fantastic elements, and the highest objects of regard are, of course, the supernatural Nāthas. The religions of the Nātha Siddhas, the *aṣṭa Siddhi*, supernatural powers, *jīvan mukti*, *ulta sādhana*, *kāya sādhana* were discussed. The fourth part discusses the Dharma cult and Bengali literature, the general nature of the cult and practices of Muslims; the Hindu conception of Dharma, Yama and Buddhist Dharma are explained.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 360-61.

¹¹¹ Shashibhushan Dasgupta, *Obscure Religious Cults*, Firma K.L. Mukhopdhayay, Calcutta, (2nd Edn), 1962

The Book “*Kāpālikas and Kālamukhās: Two Lost Saivite sects*” by David N. Lorenzen¹¹² is an example of original research in which he brings to light these two ‘*atimargika*’ sects, through the analysis of the medieval literary and epigraphical sources from across the sub-continent. The book is divided into six chapters. In the first chapter it traces out the important four sects – *Śaivas*, *Pāśupatas*, *Kāpālikas* and *Kālamukhās* - and their descriptions in medieval Sanskrit texts. In the second and third chapters, the book analyses the sources both epigraphical and textual, for the study of the *Kāpālikas*, their cult and doctrine; the mudras of the *Kāpālikas*, their provenance, spread and survival in different parts of the subcontinent. In the fourth and fifth chapters, the book elaborately discussed and analysed the two schools of the *Kālamukhās* such as the *Śakti pariṣad* in the Karnāṭaka region and the *Simha Pariṣad* in the Āndhra regions, their subdivisions, temples, *maṭhas* and rituals, educational and political activities, on the basis of textual and inscriptional evidences. In the sixth chapter, the book analyse the *Pāśupata* and *Lakuliśa* sects. Lorenzen says that the *Pāśupatas* are the oldest of the four sects and there are many similarities between the *Pāśupatas* and *Lakuliśas*. In the revised edition of the book, he further add new discoveries of the *Kāpālika* and *Kālamukhā* inscriptional and literary sources brought out in the form of appendices at the end of the text. The *Kālamukhās* had their provenance in south India during 11th-13th centuries C.E, particularly in Karnāṭaka, Āndhra and Tamiḷnādu regions in that order of prominence.

“*The Tantric Tradition*” by Acehananda Bharati¹¹³ discusses the philosophical context and terminology of the *tantra* with special reference to Tibet and India; pilgrimages, mantra, *Sandhābhāsā* (intentional language), *dīkṣā* (initiation), polarity symbolism and the *Sādhana*. He opined that *tantra* is a “Psycho-experimental speculation”. In addition, he maintains that the ‘entire speculative apparatus’ in the *tantra* is derived from non-*tantra* sources. This work discusses about the culmination of *tantra-sādhaka* as *pañcatattvam*, i.e., the ‘Five Ms’ or *Pañcamakāra*. This work is interesting and informative to know about the *Tāntric* traditions of India.

¹¹² Lorenzen David N. *Kāpālikas and Kālamukhas: Two Lost Saivite sects*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1972, (Rev.edn.1991).

¹¹³ Acehananda Bharati, *The Tantric Tradition*, Rider and Company, London, 1965

“*A Companion to Tantra*” by S. C. Banerji¹¹⁴, is one of the useful and concise books which provide a general view of the various conceptual undercurrents of *tantra*. Consisting of ten chapters and two appendices, this book speaks about the definition, meaning, origin and antiquity of the *tantra*, their number, and the broad form and content of the *tantras*; *tāntric* Śaivism of Kashmir, the different schools and sects of Śaivism and their philosophical leanings in that region; Science in *tantra*, metallurgy alchemy and medicine, music and dance, art and architecture and so on; and finally the authors of different *tantras* – Hindu, Śakta, Śaiva, Vaiṣṇava, Buddhist and Jaina and different commentaries on each of them.

Another book entitled *A Brief History of Tantra Literature* by S.C. Banerji¹¹⁵ is a commendable treatise containing a detailed description of the concepts, philosophical components and contents of many *tāntric* texts. The book in nine chapters contains an elaborate discussion about the contents and classification of the *tantras*; brief description of different *tāntric* texts of Buddhist and Hindu pantheon; miscellaneous *tāntric* works and commentaries and *tāntric* lexicons etc. This book is the most essential one for any research on *tāntric* religion.

David Gordon White’s¹¹⁶, “*The Alchemical Body: Siddha Traditions in Medieval India*”, is a primary work on alchemy, *tantra* and other esoteric traditions of medieval India. In this work, he distinguishes between Hindu and Buddhist alchemy. He affirms that *yōga* and alchemy were complementary and interpreting disciplines in which the Rasa-Siddhas and Nātha-Siddhas were closely linked in their practices. White also drew his attention towards the southern Rasa-Siddhas for better understanding of this subject. He was fascinated by the erotico-mystical side of *Tāntrism* and at times loses himself in the more sexually oriented interpretations of the nature of mercury and sulphur that are offered in certain *tāntric* texts. Besides, he clearly recognizes that the alchemical work itself is essentially concerned with the creation and intensification of an adamantine “body of light”, and took precedence over gold-making in the practices of Siddha alchemists. At the end of this work, White describes about the Siddha legacy in Modern India and says that the goals of

¹¹⁴ S. C. Banerji, *A Companion to Tantra*, Abhinav publications, Delhi, 2007.

¹¹⁵ S. C. Banerji, *A Brief History of Tantra Literature*, Calcutta, Naya Proksh, 1988.

¹¹⁶ David Gordon White, *The Alchemical Body: Siddha Tradition in Medieval India*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1996.

the *tāntric* practitioner were to remain immortality and unalloyed power in the world. Once possessed of this power, the practitioner may do anything what they wish, either positively or negatively.

R. Champakalakshmi and S. Gopal's (ed.)¹¹⁷ work is a collection of fairly disparate essays in which, K. Meenakshi's "*The Siddhas of Tamil Nadu: A Voice of Dissent*", argues that it was the Tamil Siddha movement and not the Bhakti movement that was the true inheritor of a long pan-Indian tradition of dissent in south India. But it failed to develop any alternative structures and was incorporated into the dominant tradition of *bhakti*. Meenakshi gives brief information about the Tamil Siddhas like Tirumūlar, Śivavākkiyar, Paṭṭiṇattār and Pattiragiriyaṛ as early Siddhas. She also records some information regarding the later Siddhas like Pāmbāṭṭicittar, Itakkāttucittar, Akappēycittar, Kutampaicittar, Kātuvelicittar and Aḷukunicittar. This work deals with the socio-religious background of the Tamil Siddhas, the Siddhas of North India and their voice of dissent in various forms.

In the book '*The Tantric Religion of India*' Apruba Chandra Barthakuria¹¹⁸ gives a general introduction of *Tantra*. This study mainly focuses on Assam's *Tantra*. It also give details on Assam's *Yōgini Tantra* and also covers the historical and geographical importance of *Tantra* and the occult practices of Assam's *Tāntric* religion. The religious places of Vaiṣṇavas, the Śaivas and the Śaktas extending from Northern Bengal to Eastern Assam, the philosophical study of the *Yōgini tantra*, *Śākta* religion of Assam, *Kāmakhya tantra* are described. It also mentions about the *Dēvi Pūjā*, *Kumāri Pūjā*, *Tantra Sādhana*, *Sat Karma*, Bhairavi worship and Viṣṇu worship. Then the *pūjās* like *Kubēra pūjā*, fire worship, *Varuna pūjā* and description on *Kalikapurāṇa*, worshipping of various minor and *tāntric* deities, *Sādhakas* of *Divya*, *Vīra* and *Paśu* and five *makāras* are described according to Assam's tradition.

V.V. Ramana Sastri in an interesting paper "*The Doctrinal Culture and Tradition of the Siddhas*"¹¹⁹ dealt with the philosophy and beliefs of the Siddhas in a

¹¹⁷ R. Champalakshmi and S. Gopal (eds.), *Tradition, dissent and ideology: Essays in honour of Romila Thapar*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1996

¹¹⁸ Apruba Chandra Barthakuria, *The Tantric Religion of India: An Insight into Assam's Tantra Literature*, Punthi Pustak, Kolkata, 2009

¹¹⁹ Haridas Bhattacharya (ed.), *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. IV, *The Religions*, The Ramakrishna Mission, Calcutta, 1956, pp. 300-308.

pan-Indian context. However this work gives only a superficial account about the Siddhas of Tamiḷnādu. This work clubs the Siddhas of the three schools (*Kāya Siddhas*, *Rasa Siddhas* and *Sanmārga Siddhas*), with the four Śaiva hymnal poets such as Avvaiyār, Muttutāṇḍavar, Aruṇagiri, Sīralan, etc. The writer's idea of Mahēśvara Siddhas is based on the concept of immortality held by Tāyumāṇavar and Rāmaliṅgar. Some times this work refers to Bōgar as a pre-Christian Taoist immigrant from China without substantiating the claim. Sastry outlines the salient features that distinguish the school of Tamiḷ Siddhars on the basis of comparative study of the Rasēśvara and the Mahēśvara schools, He is aware that the Tamiḷ Siddha alone provides a key to the mystery of life and death. Only the Tamiḷ Siddhars answer the question in the affirmative, claiming that death may be put off by a special course of rejuvenation (the view of the Rasēśvara school), or it may be ended by dematerializing and spiritualizing the body (the view of the Mahēśvara school)".

A.V. Subramania Aiyar's¹²⁰ *The Poetry and the Philosophy of the Tamil Siddhars: an Essay in Criticism* is a pioneering study on Siddha literature. Even today, most of the scholars who working on the Siddha literature and their cult, consider this as their primary source material for understanding the philosophy of the Tamiḷ Siddhars. He gives a reasonable answer for the question 'who is a Siddhar in Tamiḷ Literature?' And also define them as they 'have always been claimed to be seers and highly evolved and realized souls'. Aiyar gives a detailed description of the philosophical tenets of Tirumūlar which were derived from *Tirumantiram*, a masterpiece of *Yōga*, mystic and agamic lore by Tirumūlar by quoting his songs. This is followed by a detailed account on the poetry and the philosophy of the early Tamiḷ Siddhas like Śivavākkīyar, Paṭṭiṇathār, and Bhadrāgiriār. Besides, Aiyar classifies the period of the above Siddhars from 6th to 10th century C.E. He also listed the other famous Tamiḷ Siddhars like Pāmbāṭṭi Siddhar, Itaikāttu Siddhar, Ahappēy Siddhar, Kudambai Siddhar, Kaduveli Siddhar and Aḷuhuni Siddhar as later Siddhas, and determined their dates in between 11th and 16th century C.E. As a concluding remark, Aiyar says that 'the Siddhars have made a permanent and varied contribution to Tamiḷ Literature and have enriched it'. They introduced into Tamiḷ poetry not only the common speech but also an easy and flexible style. Particularly the poems of the later

¹²⁰ A. V. Subramania Aiyar, *The Poetry and the Philosophy of the Tamil Siddhars: an Essay in Criticism*, S. Mahadevan Publisher, Tirunelveli, 1957

Siddhars have been conceived and written for the masses, though portions relating to *yōga* and mystic symbolisms, which are found here and there, will not be easily understood by them. In addition to the above, Aiyar introduces three new philosophic poets viz. Saint Vāgisar, Kaṇṇudaya Vaḷḷalar and Tāṇḍavarāya Swāmigaḷ, whose songs have the vigorous poetic style and emphasize the general outlook and philosophy of the Siddhars, though they are not considered to be part of Siddha literature. He also says that ‘the Siddhars were votaries of true religion and noble philosophy’. Their poetry was subsidiary to their religious life. Knowledge of the works of the Siddhars is necessary to have a correct perspective of the religious, social and literary history of the Tamils. The fiery onslaughts of the Siddhars were not able to shake the people in their belief in and loyalty to them.

One of the most valuable books for the study of the Tamil Siddha cult is Kamil V. Zvelebil’s¹²¹ *The Poets of the Powers*. It is a reliable work on the Tamil Siddhas who were a group of *tāntric yogins*, physicians, alchemists and magicians. They left behind considerable number of literary works. His’ another book¹²², *The Siddha Quest for Immortality*, is marginally concerned with Tamil Siddhas as poets and with their writings as part of Tamil literature. Generally, this book deals with the siddha preoccupation with medicine, healing and therapies, with sexual attitudes and *yōga*, as preserved and expressed in ancient texts composed in Tamil as well as in the living practices of contemporary Siddha physicians. However, very often the poetry, writings and other literary works of early medieval and medieval Siddhas are discussed by the author in this work.

M. Arunachalam’s¹²³, *An Introduction to the History of Tamil Literature*, is one of the earliest works which extensively dealt with the history of various Tamil literary compositions. This work, divided into forty-seven chapters, starts with ‘The Land and the People’ and ‘The Language and the Literature’. Most of the individual chapters have their own unity and sufficiency, whether they are about particular authors, works or about a group of poems or class of writing. Altogether the narrative exudes an impression of speed, amplitude, variety and significant detail. There is also

¹²¹ Kamil V. Zvelebil, *The Poets of the Powers*, Rider and Company, London, 1973

¹²² Kamil V. Zvelebil, *The Siddha Quest for Immortality*, Mandrake of Oxford, Britain, 2nd Ed., 2003

¹²³ M. Arunachalam, *An Introduction to the History of Tamil Literature*, Gandhi Vidyalayam, Tiruchitrambalam, 1974.

chapter on the Lexicons, Ballads and Folk-songs, Tamil scripts and Inscriptions. The modern period is merely touched upon towards at the end of the book. Pertaining to our area of study, this book discussed about the writings of the Tamil Siddhas and said that ‘there is quite a decent volume of Siddha literature in the Tamil language and it will therefore be worthwhile to know the Siddha poets and their writing’. The songs of Tirumūlar have been collected into the Śaiva canon, but the poems of other Siddhas are said to have been collected into a handy volume known as the *Pathinen Siddhar jñāna kōvai*. He further says that the above ‘volume is not real siddha poetry. There are in it large sections of modern writings in prose and verse which will hardly fit in with the Siddha writing’. He briefly discusses about the writings of Śivavākkīyar, Paṭṭiṇatār, Avvai, and other ‘minor siddhas’ who couched in obscure and mystic language viz., Pāmbāṭṭi Siddhar, Aḷuguni Siddha, Ahappēy Siddha, Kaduveli Siddha, Kutambai Siddha, Idaikkāṭṭu Siddha and Ēnādi Siddha. At the end of this work, Arunachalam gives a long list of chronology of the Siddhas and their literary compositions.

R. Venkatraman’s¹²⁴ *A History of the Tamil Siddha Cult* is one book which provides the essential and basic information about the origin, evolution, general features of the Tamil Siddha cult and its impact. The introductory part gives a brief sketch on the Siddha cult and the next chapter dealt with the various sources available in both Tamil and non-Tamil languages. The third chapter is about the origin of the Tamil Siddha cult, in which the author says that ‘the period of evolution would go back to Tamil proto-historic times’ which are later developed from different roots viz., the proto-historic native beginnings, the Kāpālīka cult, the *Tāntric* Buddhism and the Nātha Siddha cult. He classified the Siddhas into three groups: the *Sanmārga*-Siddhas, the *Jñāna*-Siddhas and the *Kāya*-Siddhas and discusses its evolution in the fourth chapter. He also gave a chronological list of Siddhas in this chapter. The next deals with the features of the Tamil Siddha cult that includes different philosophies of the above said three groups, and their religion, *yōga*, Siddha system of medicine, alchemy, beliefs and superstitions, social attitudes, their literature. The sixth chapter discusses the question of the current prevalence of a continuous tradition of the Siddhas and also examines the impact of the Siddhas on the Tamil society in general. Finally he concludes that the Siddha cult is a mixture of exotic influences, borrowing

¹²⁴ R. Venkatraman, *A History of the Tamil Siddha Cult*, Ennes Publications, Madurai, 1990.

from other cults. At the same time, *Siddhism* and its medicine is becoming popular again as part of local revivalist movements. This work includes 34 appendixes which carries various additional details in relation to the Tamil Siddhas. From Appendix 2 to Appendix 5, he gave the list of Siddhas which are mentioned in different works, along with a list of councils in which the Siddhas associated with, as well as the list of their associated places. But this book did not make any attempt to remove the ambiguity about the chronology of the Tamil Siddhas.

T. N. Gaṇapathy's¹²⁵, *The Philosophy of the Tamil Siddhas*, is an excellent introduction to the philosophy and mysticism of the Tamil Siddhas. This work is a comprehensive one which consists of nine chapters including the introduction and the conclusion. These chapters cover the essentials of the philosophy and mysticism of the Siddhas. Many of the aspects of the Tamil Siddhas have been dealt with systematically in this book such as their heritage, their philosophical ideas and methods, their language style, and their social concern.

His another work¹²⁶ *The Contribution of the Tamil Siddhas to Dravidian Thought*, is a compilation of a series of lectures of the author on Tamil Siddhas. In lecture one, there are two chapters which deals with the general introduction about the Tamil Siddhas such as their features, traditions, religion, classifications, etc. Gaṇapathy classified the Siddhas into many different groups viz., Nātha Siddhas, Rasa-Siddhas, Mahēśvara-Siddhas and Saṅgata-Siddhas. The Rasa-Siddhas are medicine men while the Saṅgata-Siddhas are the Buddhist Siddhas. According to another classification, Siddhas fall under three categories or *varga* viz. *Bāla-varga*, *Mūla-varga* and *Kailāsa-varga*. While speaking about the number of Siddhas, he also accepts that 'there is no agreed view as to the exact number of Siddhas'. In lecture two, the author discuss about the unique contributions of the Tamil Siddhas to Dravidian thought, *tāntric* traditions, the *tāntric yōga sādhana* of the Tamil Siddhas with special reference to Tirumūlar and Bōgar; contribution of the Tamil Siddhas to the mysticism of the Dravidian culture, the philosophy of the human body, the twilight language of the Siddhas and also about their social concerns. Besides, this work also dealt with the classification of *Tantras*, distinctive features of the *Tantras*,

¹²⁵ T. N. Gaṇapathy, (2004), *Op.cit.*,

¹²⁶ T. N. Gaṇapathy, (2008) *The Contribution of the Tamil Siddhas to Dravidian Thought*, Dravidian University Kuppam

Śiva-Yōga, *Kuṇḍalini Yōga*, the *cakra* system, *prāṇāyāma*, *Bhandas* and *mudrās*, mantra and *mandala*, *yantra*, unique mystic expressions of the Tamil Siddhas, *Sandhya Bhaśa*, the twilight element in the *pañca-makāra*, etc.

Another important book on the *Tamil Siddhas* is the one by S.A.Sarma¹²⁷. In this book the author traces out the antiquity of the Tamil Siddhas to the remote past and says that the previous researchers failed to understand the native element of the Tamil Siddhas. He then discusses threadbare the songs of the Siddhas to analyse the philosophical under currents. This is followed by a biographical sketch of various siddhas such as Nandi, Tirumūla Nāyaṇar, Kaṇḍamalai Siddhar, Agattiyar, Kudambai Siddhar, Kaduveli Siddhar, Kapilar, Avvaiyār, Tiruvaḷḷuvar and Siddha Rāmaliṅgam and analyse the conceptual apparatus of the Tamil Siddhas.

Though there are many works available on *Tantra* and *Tāntrism*, very few works are dealing with the Siddha cult in general and Tamil Siddhas in particular. Only such kinds of works are discussed in this review. However, besides these there are numerous works available in Tamil on the Siddha Medicine as well as Tamil Siddha cult which are also consulted for the present study. Most of those works are based on the legends and folk-tradition, fictions or carrying the imaginary narrations of the author without any authenticity. Therefore such kinds of works are not added in this review. However, some of the important historical elements found here and there in the Tamil vernacular literature are utilized in the writing of this thesis.

Aims and Objectives

The Siddha cult giving emphasis to *yōgic* practices and attainment of *Siddha Dēha* becomes a part of the Śaiva sectarian faith and becomes institutionalized with the amalgamation of various *atimārgika* sects such as *Pāśupatas*, *Kāpālikas* and *Kālamukhās*. This spiritual and practical order was further strengthened by the *Nāthas* or *Kānphat yogis* during 10th-13th centuries in the process assimilating even the teachers and tenets of the Sūfī order. By 14th century, all the sectarian groups classified as *atimārgikas* merge together under the Nātha-Siddha tradition which becomes a pan-Indian tradition. Western India becomes the centre of Nātha-siddhas as indicated by a number of *siddha-kṣētras* in Mahārāstra and Karnāṭaka regions,

¹²⁷ S.A.Sarma, *Op.cit.*

particularly in the river valleys of Godāvāri, Kṛīṣṇa and Tuṅgabhadra. The popularity of Nātha Siddhas among the elite and the lower sections of the medieval society can be understood through the textual references, which speaks about the *yōgic* practices, magical powers and performances of Nātha-Siddhas.

The sculptural representations of the Nātha Siddhas also seems to have begun from around 13th Century C.E as indicated by such individual sculptures of the Nātha Siddhas in Āndhra Pradesh¹²⁸, which contained the names of the Nāthas engraved on the pedestal portions. However, the Nātha Siddha sculptures become very popular in the Vijayanagara Art. Beginning from the Vijayanagara rule, these Nātha-Siddhas of Nava Nātha tradition began to be portrayed in the low relief sculptures on the pillars of the *maṇḍapas*, lower portions of the *Gōpuras*, in both Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava temples. Although scholars have relegated these representations as simple decorative motifs¹²⁹, their prolific occurrence in the every nook and corner of the Vijayanagara Empire indicate a deliberate attempt on the part of the schools of sculptors to popularize the Nātha-Siddhas. Although there are many studies on the teachings and philosophy of the Nātha Siddhas, none of them have studied the significance of the Nātha sculptural representations. These and other *tāntric* sculptures portray the rituals and cults of the Nātha-Siddha tradition; which permeates in the practices of the Siddhas of 18th and 20th centuries, particularly in Tamiḷ region, which were glorified in the literary works and attracted the devotion of the popular masses.

Although a good number of studies in English and Tamiḷ are available on the Tamiḷ Siddhas, there were many discrepancies and contentious issues which need to be analyzed and probed into. The Siddha cult was not local to the Tamiḷ region as very little inscriptional evidence is coming forth. Further, the Nava Nātha cult which is popular in other parts of the sub-continent does not seem to continue in the Tamiḷ region in toto, where the numbers of Siddhas are variously referred to as nine or eighteen. Except Mīṇanātha and Gōrakṣanātha, the list of Tamiḷ Siddhas as enunciated by various scholars contained divergent lists. Except a couple, none of the works contain any chronological discussion of the nine/eighteen Tamiḷ Siddhas. Moreover, the Tamiḷ Siddhas are eulogized as atheist, anti-establishment and anti-

¹²⁸ Sastri, A Umamaheswara, *Kadapa Jilla Sasanalu: Samskriti Charitra*, (Inscriptions of Kadapa District: Culture and History) in Telugu, Sahiti Samrajyamu, Proddatur, 1995.

¹²⁹ Anna L. Dallapiccola and Anila Verghese, *Op.cit*, p. 79.

brahmanical. Their writings and their songs were also quoted to support the above hypothesis.

The previous writings passingly mention about the pan-Indian Nātha-Siddha tradition in which the Tamil Siddhas were superficially accommodated yet having their own regional/geographical identity. Keeping these in mind, the present study aims to have a holistic perspective of the Siddha cult in Tamil region.

In this study, the philosophical tenets and ritual practices of the Nātha Siddhas will be comprehensively analysed and the Tamil Siddha philosophy and their practices will be contextualized in the Pan-Indian Nātha Siddha tradition. It will also be studied as to how and why the pre-Vijayanagara Nātha Siddha cult was patronized by the Vijayanagara rulers in the other parts of Peninsular India, and how this cult penetrated into the Tamil region mostly during the period of their rule and after the disintegration of the Vijayanagara Empire. The sculptural representations of the Nātha Siddhas are found extensively in the Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava temples of south India during the Vijayanagara and post Vijayanagara (Nāyaka) periods (14th–17th Centuries CE). Reasons for the patronization of the Nātha cult by the Vijayanagara kings were not properly looked into. While none of the textual descriptions of the Nātha Siddhas consider them as divine beings, the stone sculptors have devised ingenious methods to represent the Nātha Siddhas on vehicles without engraving their individual names and raising them to the status divine beings. On the basis of their vehicles we have to identify the individual Siddhas. Although the popularity of the Nātha Siddhas is felt in parts of south India long before 14th century as indicated by the literary and inscriptional evidences, their sculptural representations were not so prolific. With the emergence of the Vijayanagara Empire, the Nātha Siddha cult becomes an institutionalized one being supported by the Śaiva *maṭhas* and patronized by the ruling and elite sections of the society. Thus the sculptural representations of the Nātha Siddhas become manifold in both Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava temples across the country.

To study these historical processes, the literary works as well as the sculptural representations of the Nātha Siddhas will be analysed across the Peninsular India to high light the penetration of this cult into the Tamil region. The historical continuity of the Siddha cult in the Tamil region is another important facet of the survival and

continuation of the medieval era during which the belief systems and practices continue in the Tamil region and the Siddhas of the modern times were more famous than their medieval counterparts in having large number of followers and devotees, and their sayings, teachings and songs attained great popularity. This study will analyse the writings and songs of the Tamil Siddhas of modern times to see the continuation of the basic tenets of medieval Siddha cults and practices and thereby establishing a link between the medieval and modern Siddha cult in Tamil region.

Scope

This thesis is planned to give a comprehensive coverage of the history, traditions, rituals, etc. of the Siddha Cult from early medieval period to the modern period. Similarly, this work concentrates on spiritual, philosophical and literary aspects of the Siddha Cult. An attempt is made in this study to take historical and thematic survey on Siddha Cult in Tamilnādu. Major difficulty in this study is to define the exact starting period of the Siddha cult. However as per available sources, many of the *Tāntric* texts are dated by the historians to the 6th to 7th century C.E. Besides, the epigraphical evidences in relation to this cult are also available only from 11th century C.E. onwards. Similarly the art representations of this cult are also start existing in the temples not earlier than the 15th century. Therefore, this study is focused to investigate the problem from 7th century onwards. Since this study also deals with the continuity of this cult, the contemporary period is taken into consideration for research. However, the Siddha medicine and their alchemical preparations, herbal drugs and surgery, which is more popular than their *yōgic* contributions, were not discussed as the present study is to look at their philosophy and rituals of *yōgic* and *tāntric* dimension. Thus, the period of this study covers from 7th century C.E to 21st century. The present study is covering the entire geographical limits of Tamilnādu region including the present Union Territory of Puducherry. However, since Siddha Cult is a Pan-Indian tradition, neighbouring states of Tamilnādu in south India are also surveyed. (see Maps)

Methodology

A detailed survey method is applied, including field visits and observations in the *Siddha Kṣētras*. Epigraphical and archaeological sources which include

inscriptions and sculptures from various protected monuments are also located, collected and included in this study. On the basis of available epigraphical sources sculptural and literary evidences, an attempt is made to study the chronology of the siddha cult in south India. In studying the historical continuity, informal oral interview method is adopted to collect relevant information from the devotees/followers of modern/contemporary times, ranging from highly influential politicians and executives, and rich and elite sections of the society as well as the vast majority of the common people.

Sources for the Study

Source materials for this study were collected from the study area directly through field work. *Sthalapurāṇas* of the famous *Siddha Kṣētras* are collected meticulously. Epigraphical sources published by the government authorities and organizations, relevant to this study are collected. The published books, articles both in Tamil and English are used as secondary sources to cull relevant information required for the study.

Epigraphical Sources

There are very few inscriptions are found in South India regarding the Siddha cult. All the reliable inscriptions issued by various rulers and were later published in the epigraphical collections like *Annual Report on Epigraphy (ARE)*, *South Indian Inscriptions (SII)*, *Epigraphia Carnatica (EC)*, *Epigraphia Indica (EI)* and other published sources, that deals with the Siddha Cult in South India are discussed.

Primary Sources in English

Arthur Avalon also known as Sir John Woodroffe is one English scholar who wrote authoritative works in English a good number of books on *Tāntric* religion and related aspects which happen to be the translations of the Sanskrit texts such as *Tantra–Tattva*, *Mahā Nirvana Tantra* etc. These and other works of this *Tāntric* practitioner provides us with the knowledge of the original meaning of the *tāntric* rituals, cults and complex philosophical tenets which are described by the Tamil Siddhas in a veiled manner. Other primary sources in English such as ‘*Gōrakhnāth and the Kānpata Yogis*’ by G.W. Briggs happens to be the field based study of the

Colonial Era and provides us with the first-hand information of the surviving cults of the medieval age in Northern India. ‘*The Gōrakṣa Siddhānta Saṅgraha* edited by Gopinath Kaviraj and *The Siddha Siddhānta Saṅgraha* of Bālabhadra are also translations of the Sanskrit works of the same name which provides us with a rich data on the Nātha-Siddha cult. *Tantras of the Reverse Current: 27 Hindu Texts Abstracted*¹³⁰ is another book which is a primary source containing summaries of the twenty seven Hindu *tantras* of the *Vāmācāra* and *Kaulācāra* sects such as *Srikula*, *Kalikula*, *Nathakula*, *Tarakula* besides other miscellaneous *tantras*. Besides the book also contain a brief methodological and conceptual discussion of the *tāntric* philosophy, such as *yōga*, *mantra*, *yantra*, *mudrās*, *nyāsa*, *kavaca*, sexuality and five *makāras*, *tāntric* gods and goddesses etc.,

Primary Sources in Tamil

The earliest reference to and treatment of the Siddha Cult is found only in the *Tirumandiram*¹³¹. It is the only source book of the *Sanmārga* Siddha School¹³², and also a major work in Tamil on *Tantra-sāstra*. Tirumūlar on the banks of the River Kāvēri wrote his *Tirumandiram* of 3000 short verses, which have been grouped by Nambi as the Tenth Book (*Tirumuṟai*) of the Śaiva Canon¹³³. The name of the book itself is significant: it is a *mantra*, mystic utterance. Tirumūlar is considered to be the first of the Siddhas. He gives out the experience both in a classical language and in the language of the masses; the ecstatic outpourings of a Siddha are also there in his work¹³⁴. This seminal Tamil work is the first treatise which deals with the different aspects of the *kuṇḍalini-yōga*, under the name of *Śiva-Yōga*. Some new mystic expressions were introduced for the first time by Tirumūlar. The Siddha view of the body as a vehicle for *mokṣa sādhana* is unique in the spiritual history of Tamil country. Tirumūlar also introduced the concept of the twilight language as *sūnya-*

¹³⁰ Michael Magee, *Tantras of the Reverse Current: 27 Hindu Texts Abstracted*, www.sivasakti.com, 2008

¹³¹ *Tirumandiram: tandirams* III and IV. Though this work has been published by many, the Tiruppanandāl Mutt edition is followed in this thesis. This edition contains 3047 quatrains, plus 61 verses in the addenda gathered from various commentaries. We consider all these verses authentic.

¹³² Though it deals with almost all the salient features of the Siddha cult, its tacit purpose is to establish the superiority of the *Sanmārga* Siddha school; vide., *Tirumandiram*: 1487

¹³³ The Saiva Canon consists of twelve books popularly known as *Paṇṇiru Tirumuṟai* in Tamil, collected and compiled by Nambi Āṇḍār Nambi, a contemporary of Rājaraṣa Cōḷa I.

¹³⁴ M. Arunachalam, *Op.cit*, pp.143-144

sambāsanai, which is a unique mode of expression in Tamil. In this work, Tirumūlar says that the purity of the *jīva* can be attained through *pāsa* or attachment itself. It fulfills the meaning of the word ‘*Tantra*’ a ‘web’ which joins the spiritual and the material dimensions of life¹³⁵. The *Siddhar Periya Nānakkovai* is an anthology of 79 songs by three groups of authors¹³⁶.

Among them 32 songs by nine *Nāna*-Siddhas constitute the source book for the *Nāna*-Siddha School. This popular work is available in numerous editions¹³⁷. However, the ‘*Siddhar Pātakaḷ*’ edited by Tha. Kovendhan (2001) is followed in this thesis¹³⁸.

With regard to the two primary sources mentioned above viz., *Tirumandiram* and the *Nānakkovai* there are some major difficulties. They are: (i) no internal evidence gives us any historical information, least of all dates of events or bio-data of persons¹³⁹; and (ii) the literature was not written to provide material for future historians, but for other contemporary purposes of a non-historical nature, perhaps necessary for those times. Even so, the theological and metaphysical content will be useful for this thesis since it is interested in these also. The difficulties inherent in utilizing this kind of literature straightaway as a source for history are obvious.

Secondary Sources

After the *Tirumandiram*, the traditional Tamil literature is again silent about the Siddha cult. In the *Sittuvahuppu*¹⁴⁰ attributed to Aruṇagiri (c. 15th century), a

¹³⁵ T.N. Ganapathy, (2008), p.18

¹³⁶ They are: 1. The nine *Nāna*-Siddhas, 2. Nine Siddha-like poets and 3. A few late authors assuming the names of Gods (e.g. Śiva and Subramaṇiya) sages (e.g. Vālmiki and Agattiyar), *Kāya*-Siddhas (e.g. Koṅṇaṇar, Saṭṭaimuṇi, Karuvurār and Rāmadevar) and poets (Vaḷḷuvar and Tirumūlar). The content and style of the songs of the third group are so stereotyped as to suggest a single, late authorship.

¹³⁷ Many earlier editions are available for e.g. Ramalinga Mudaliyar (1899) in two volumes; M.V. Venugopala Pillai (1974), and another edited work by Aru. Ramanathan is popularly referred by all.

¹³⁸ Tha. Kovendhan *Siddhar Patalgaḷ*, Poompukar Pathipagam, Chennai in 2001(6th edition). This work includes the collected songs of thirty-three Tamil Siddhas with a brief introduction to them and also it ended with an appendix on glossary of important words.

¹³⁹ The little data which are gleaned from the *Tirumandiram* are highly exaggerated; e.g., the author says ‘I lived for seventy million *yugas*’ *Tirumandiram*:74); cf., *Nānakkovai*, *Pāmbāṭṭi Siddhar Pādal*: 25-39.

¹⁴⁰ *Tiruvahuppu*: pp. 191-222. It contains 25 *vahuppus* (divisions) of which the *Sittuvahuppu* is the sixteenth. In this a Siddha from Kailas, after boasting about his ‘powers’ and knowledge of herbs and alchemy, declares that “he is a real Siddha who has ‘realised’ the *Tiruppugal* (The great fame) of Lord Muruga, who is the most famous among the Siddhas”; *Ibid*: II. 95 f.

devotional hymnist on Muruga, we find a description of the main features of the *Kāya-Siddhas*. Stray references to Gōrakkan, and his miracles are found in the *Paḷaṇittalapurāṇam*¹⁴¹ of Balasubramania Kavirayar (c. 17th century). In the *Koṅgumaṇḍala Satakam*¹⁴² (c.18th century C.E), references are found about the Siddhas like Bōgar and Pulippāṇi. Probably from 18th century onwards, certain *Sthalapurāṇas* such as the *Karuvūrppurāṇam*, give stray glimpses of the lives of a few Siddhas. However, these accounts tend to be mythical in content. The history of Tamil literature by M. Arunachalam¹⁴³ is perhaps the only attempt in Tamil to discuss the chronology of the major Siddhas of all the groups. However, the author limited his analysis to the origin and special features of the Siddha cult in Tamil region. Other works¹⁴⁴ on the Tamil Siddhas are popular and journalistic in nature.

Scheme of the Thesis

This study is presented in five chapters.

Chapter I: As an introductory this chapter will outline the genesis, nature and extent of the Siddha cult, sources for the study, review of literature, aims and scope and chapterisation.

Chapter II: It will give an extensive survey of literary works, in which the philosophical tenets and ritualistic practices of Siddha Nāthas are discussed in a chronological order to understand the common features between these two forms of the cult and how the medieval south Indian religion display fusion of such diverse belief systems.

Chapter III: It will discuss the inscriptional and sculptural evidences of the Nātha-Siddha cult in South India, with particular emphasis on Tamilnādu. The appearance of the Nātha siddhas in the sculptural art of the Vijayanagara period is discussed and described and their significance is analysed. Besides the sculptural forms of the Nātha

¹⁴¹ *Paḷaṇittalapurāṇam*: XXII, 45

¹⁴² *Koṅgumaṇḍala Satakam*:36

¹⁴³ He deals with the Tamil literature of the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries, setting apart a volume for each. The volume on the 16th century is divided into three parts issued separately.

¹⁴⁴ V. Balaramiah has issued a number of sleek volumes, none of which is critical and academic. This is true of R. Manickavasagam's *Namnāttu Siddharkal* (1978) and Sāmi Chidambaranar's *Siddharkal Kaṇḍa Viṇṇānamum Tattuvamum*. e.g., A. Shanmugavelan: "*Tirumūlar Aruliya Maruttuvat-tirumandiram Ennāyiram*" in *Ulagatamil Mānādu Viḷa Malar*, Madras, 1968

Siddhas, the representation of *tāntric* elements such as the *Yōgic* postures, *Kuṇḍalini Yōga*, is also discussed to show how they are connected to the Nātha Siddha Cult.

Chapter IV: It will deal with the History and historical continuity of the Siddha Cult in Tamilnādu with its ramifications in the 21st century. The contemporary Siddha folklore which is still popular in parts of Tamilnādu is presented and discussed in this chapter to understand the continued influence of the Siddhas on the Society at large.

Chapter V: This will be the summary of the findings of this research work and the broad conclusions thereof.

Chapter II

***TĀNTRIC* LITERATURE: A SURVEY**

In this chapter a survey of all the relevant literary works dealing with *Tāntric* ideals, methods, cults, rituals and philosophy, belonging to various sectarian faiths such as Hindu, Śaiva, Pāśupata, Śākta and Miśra is presented from the viewpoint of understanding and identifying the conceptual, ideological, ritual and spiritual undercurrents of the Nātha Siddha cult. Such a study will also help in understanding the common aspects of these sectarian faiths, the inter-changes and intra-exchanges of ideas, methods, and ritual paraphernalia and occurrence of common names of individual teachers in these diverse faiths. These commonalities will also help in understanding, identifying and interpreting the sculptural representations of the Nāths Siddhas and other *Tāntric* elements such as the *yōgic* exercises and posture, erotic representations/sexual scenes found in the Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava temples of medieval south India. Some of the *yōgic* postures and personal ritualistic attributes found in the sculptural art were also described in the *Tāntric* literary compositions of a later date which preserve the historical memories of the medieval times.

Although, the Nātha Siddha tradition has many commonalities with the Tibetan tradition, the literary works of the Buddhist *Tantra* are not discussed here in view of the fact that, by the time the Nātha Siddha cult got consolidated in South India, the Vajrayāna Buddhism disappears from the religious stage, particularly in south India. More over, as discussed in the first chapter, the Nava Nātha cult of the Western Indian tradition (*paśchimāmnāya*) or the Eighteen/Nine Siddha cult of the Tamil region, developed as independent entities having the local teachers, all of whom are not found in the pan-Indian tradition. By that time each region in India began to have its own local personalities as Nātha Siddhās, despite having some common names across the subcontinent.

The Vaiṣṇava *Tāntric* literary texts known as the *Samhitās* were also not discussed in this chapter for the same reason that they have no relation with the Nātha Siddha tradition. It has been generally accepted that the Nātha Siddhā tradition has a general predilection to the Śaivism and Śaktism and none of the Nātha Siddha teachers are mentioned as following Vaiṣṇavism. All the Nātha Siddha centres are

having Śaivite temples and connections with the Śaiva mathas. Being part of the belief systems of the non-Brahmanical order, the Nātha Siddhas found an elevated status in Śaivism. Their personal attributes also indicate their sectarian affiliation, particularly in the wearing of Sacred Ash (*Bhaṣma/Vibhūti*) and *Rudrākṣas*, which are characteristically associated with Śaivism.

Similarly, the most orthodox religion as Jainism also transforms in a *Tāntric* one by the assimilation of the diverse rituals and adoption of a wide gamut of deities as consorts of the Tīrthaṅkaras. But Jainism had no connection what so ever with the Nātha Siddha cult. Hence the *Tāntric* Jaina canonical works were also not discussed here.

The *Tāntric* Literature

Tantra can be termed as a class of literature which deviates from the *vēdic*-brahminical scriptural texts such as *Dharmasāstra*, *Dharmasūtra* etc. One of the dictionary meanings of the term is ‘*śruti*’ (*Vēda* transmitted through the word of the mouth). of the *vēdic* literature, *Atharvaṇa Vēda* ‘is a voluminous source of knowledge of the popular religion comprising of the belief in umpteen spirits, goblins, ghosts, demons, magical practices and drawings. It is in this *Vēda*, the rudiments of *tantra* are to be located¹. Although it has been accepted that *Atharvāna Vēda* contained the germs of *Tāntric* ideas, methods and practices, it is not clearly known when *Tāntric* literature originated.

The *Tantras* are the most esoteric of the canonical texts. The word itself, derived from the root meaning ‘to spread’, is applied to a variety of treatises, and affords no clue to the contents of these works. In India only a part of this voluminous literature called ‘*Tantra*’ has been published so far, and the bulk is scattered and unpublished. While resembling the *śūtras* in literary form, they differ from them in dealing with ritual and *yōga* rather than with ethics and philosophy and in being unintelligible without the traditional commentary. Moreover, the techniques they prescribe can be practiced only when the requisite spiritual power will be transmitted

¹ For its populist character, study of the *Yajur Vēda* has been a taboo in the upper echelons of the society. The term ‘*trayī*’ (the triad) came to be used to indicate the three Vēdas: *ṚgVēda*, *YajurVēda* and *SāmaVēda*. S.C.Banerji, *A Companion to Tantra*, Abhinav publications, Delhi, 2007, p.12.

to the disciple by a Master. Another significant feature of the *Tāntric* knowledge is its secrecy. It is stated in *Shatchakranirupana* that this knowledge can be received only from a *Guru* after being duly initiated.

There is no unanimity among the writers about the number and names of the *tantras*. “While the number is one lakh according to some, it is millions according to others”². Arthur Avalon has given three different lists of *Tāntric* texts (of 64 *Tantras* each) in three different regions viz., *Viṣṇu Kranta*, *Ratha Kranta* and *Aśva Kranta*. Further he has given a list of 192 *Tantras*, some of which have been published. The *Sammoha* or *Sammohana-tantra* knows the existence of 402 *Śaiva Tantras*, 339 *Vaiṣṇava Tantras*, 108 *Saura Tantras*, 122 *Gaṇapatya Tantras* and 39 *Bauddha Tantras*³. The numbers are fictitious, but they show that the author of the said *Tantra* had a vague idea of the sects and their texts⁴.

Generally the *Tāntric* texts are known by such names as *Tantra*, *Upatantra*, *Āgama*, *Samhitā*, *Yāmala*, *Dāmara*, *Tattva*, *Kalpa*, *Arṇava (ka)*, *Uddāla*, *Uddīśa*, *Upasamkhyā*, *Cudāmanī*, *Vimarśinī*, *Cintāmani*, *Purāna*, *Upasajñā*, *Kaksaputi*, *Kalpadruma*, *Kāmadhenu*, *Sabhāva*, *Avataraṇaka*, *Sukta*, *Amṛta (tarpaṇa)*, *Darpana*, *Sāgara* etc⁵. Usually the *Tāntric* works of the *Śaivas* are called *Āgamas*, those of the *Śaktas* are called *Tantras*, and those of the *Vaiṣṇavas* are known as *Samhitās*. The *Nityasodasikārṇava* states that *Tantras* are endless in number but it records only sixty-four *Kaula Tantras*. The *Saundaryalaharī*, attributed to Śaṅkarācārya, also refers to sixty-four *Tantras*. The *Tantrāloka* of Abhinavagupta states that there are three groups of ten, eighteen and sixty-four *Śaiva Tantras*. The *Śaktisaṅgamantra* refers to the *Tāntric* sects and treaties of the *Vaiṣṇavas*, *Gaṇapatyas*, *Śaivas*, *Svāyambhūvas*, *Candras*, *Pāśupatas*, *Cīnas*, *Jainas*, *Kālāmukhas* and *Vaidikas*.

A classification of *Tāntric* texts on the basis of three currents such as *dakṣiṇa*, *vāma* and *madhyama* is also found. Each of these texts is again subdivided into two classes as (i) inner (*hārda*) and (ii) outer (*bāhya*). This division is made in terms of

² *Ibid.* p.17.

³ P.C. Bagchi, *Op.cit.* p.100.

⁴ N. N. Bhattacharya, *History of the Tantric Religion*, Manohar, New Delhi, 1992 (Rep.), p. 37.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 38. For more lists of *tantras* also see Pranab Bandyopadhyay, *The Goddess of Tantra*, Punthi Pustak, Calcutta, 1990, pp. 7-8

divya, *kaula* and *vāma*. The *āmnāya* divisions, six or nine, of the regions are often brought under two general categories viz. *Kādimata* and *Hādimata*. According to another tradition, *Tantras* are classified into *aṣṭaka*, *maṅgala*, *cakra* and *śikhā*. In fact, many often the terms like *Tantra*, *Āgama* and *Samhitā* are used in the same sense, and each of these terms denotes some types of religious text.

According to the *Vārāhītantra*, *Āgama* deals with seven topics, viz., cosmology, destruction, worship of god, *sādhana*, *puraścaraṇa*, six forms of rites and four forms of meditation. The number of *Āgamas* of the *Pañcarātra* School is generally stated to be 108, but on comparison with different lists their number appears to be more than Two hundred. The *Vārāhītantra* gives a list of twelve special *Āgamas* which are *Muktaka*, *Prapañca*, *Śāradā*, *Nārada*, *Mahārṇava*, *Kapila*, *Yōga*, *Kalpa*, *Kapiñjala*, *Amṛtaśuddhi*, *Vīra* and *Siddhasamvaraṇa*.

Another class of *Tāntric* literature is called *Dāmara* which traditionally consists of six texts known as *Śiva*, *Yōga*, *Durga*, *Sārasvata*, *Brahmā* and *Gandharva*. *Yāmala* is a special class of *Tāntric* Literature, the principal ones being eight in number: *Rudra*, *Skanda*, *Brahma*, *Viṣṇu*, *Yama*, *Vāyu*, *Kubera* and *Indra*. Two old texts – *Piṅgalāmata* and *Jayadratha* – belong to the *Yāmala* group. Besides the above, there are other *Yāmalas* like *Āditya* and *Gaṇēśa*⁶.

The *Tantriks* call the *Tantra* as *Śāstra*, which is considered to be the word of god. Śakti is the important goddess of *Tantra*. She is responsible for creation, expansion and destruction of the universe. *Puruṣa* is of secondary importance, though the *Śakti* cannot accomplish the work of creation of the universe without *Puruṣa*. This is why in Śaktism, *Śakti* is the main deity and the *Puruṣa* a subordinate one. The male deities in Śaktism are called Bhairavas. Śiva is also a Bhairava. But he being the *Puruṣa* of Śakti his position is different from them. In reference to the deities the *Tantras* can be classified as Śakti, Śiva and Bhairava. Though the *Tantras* are many and differ from each other in respect of matters mostly of procedure there is only one

⁶ *Ibid.*

common principle underlying all of them - the emphasis on *yōgic* practices. The six and half *tantras* which contain the gist of all the *Tantras* are specified in *Tantraloka*⁷.

The voluminous *Tāntric* Literature is written in all the Indian languages, but most of it is in Sanskrit. It has a long tradition and has become an essential and integral part of Hinduism, which in course of time became largely *Tāntric* in theory and practice. It is not definitely known when the first work on *Tantra* was composed. But no extant *Tāntric* work can be dated earlier than the 5th century C.E. It appears that Buddhist Tantra preceded Hindu *Tantra*. According to tradition, the two Buddhist *Tantras*, *Mūlakalpatantra* and *Samājatantra* were composed in the 1st and 3rd centuries C.E. respectively⁸.

The major difficulty in understanding the evolutionary patterns of *āgamas* is the lack of a historical proof of their chronological order. Some are believed to be very ancient, although there is no proof of their having existed before the 6th or 7th century C.E. More recent *Śaivāgamas* date back to the 13th or 14th century. But whatever the date, they have certainly been modified through interpolations in course of time. Their place of origin is unknown; several features point to south India, where they still form the basis of Śaiva practices and beliefs, but they were also considered authoritative in Kaśmir⁹.

Because of the uncertainties of the date of their origin, few scholars have ventured to explain the origin and evolution of the *Tantras*. Some advocate an early origin, suggesting that the literature existed as an esoteric practice for many centuries before it got codified in textual form. If this were the case, then *Tantra* must have existed before the 6th century. According to Pranab Bandhopadhyay, '*Tantras* or *āgamas* as textual sources started appearing around the 7th century C.E. However, the exact origin of *Tantra* seems to be lost in a mysterious antiquity. Many schools of thought claim that the *Tantras* existed during the period as old as that of the *Vēdas*. In other words, they seem to have originated in the conception of the Creator through the

⁷ Rajkumar Pruthi and Rameshwari Devi, *Religions and Faiths in India*, Mangal Deep Publications, Jaipur, 2004, pp. 20-21

⁸ S. C. Banerji, *A Brief History of Tantra Literature*, Naya Prokash, Calcutta, 1988, p. 164.

⁹ Mircea Eliade(ed) *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, Macmillan Publishing Company, New York, 1987, vol. 2, p.102.

aspect of motherhood'¹⁰. From 16th century onwards we begin to get written versions of popular vernacular compositions of *Tāntric* character.

Tāntric themes include the nature of the deity, cosmogony, description and worship of deities, *mantras* and *yantras*, *Tāntric yōga*, magic, and so on. Some *Tantras* are distinguished by a better Sanskrit and more complex and elaborate ideas, for instance the *Nētra*, *Svacchanda*, *Mālinīvijaya*, or *Vijñānabhairava*, all connected with Kaśmir. The best-known one in the West, the *Mahānirvāna Tantra*, is an 18th century fabrication¹¹.

These sacred texts formed a literary thread interwoven with the secret transmission from master to disciple. As mentioned above, some of the most difficult and profound *Tantras* were produced in the early period, most probably little earlier to the 8th century. By the time *Tantra* became the dominant system during 10th-13th centuries, a series of commentaries and authored works had appeared. Nāgārjuna's *Pañcakrama* is among the earliest. The *Tāntric Candrakīrti* (9th century C.E) wrote a commentary on the *Guhyasamāja*, and Buddhaguhya (8th century C.E) discussed the *Mahāvairocana*. Sanskrit commentaries eventually were written to fossilize even the spontaneous poems of the Sahaja saints.

The Āgamas

The *āgamas* are the basic scriptures of both Southern and Kaśmir Śaivism. *Āgama* means the source from which the spiritual knowledge spreads in all directions. It has seven characteristics such as creation of the universe, dissolution of the universe, worship of gods and goddesses, spiritual practice, repetition of the mantras for attaining perfection, and performance of *satkarma*¹². According to tradition, they are considered to be divinely inspired and emanating from Śiva¹³. The *Āgamas* are of three main classes' viz., *Śaivāgama*, *Śaktāgama* and *Vaiṣṇavāgama* or *Pañcarātra*¹⁴.

¹⁰ Pranab Bandyopadhyay, *op.cit.*, p. 1

¹¹ Mircea Eliade, *op.cit.*, vol. 6, pp.365-366.

¹² *Sat karma* means six actions namely *marāṇa* (destruction of persons), *uchātana* (driving away of enemies), *vaśīkaraṇa* (bewitching of men or animals), *stambhana* (suppression of the function of a faculty by incantation), *shanti* (peace) and *vidvēsana* (separating the friends).

¹³ Mircea Eliade, *op.cit.*, vol. 6. P.365.

¹⁴ Pranab Bandyopadhyay, *op.cit.*, pp. 7-8.

According to one tradition, the basic *Śaiva Āgamas* are eighteen in number and according to another it is twenty eight¹⁵. Similar to this, each and every sect also have their own *Āgamas*. The *Āgamas* are usually in verse, and vary in length. In theory they consist of four parts (*pādas*): on knowledge or doctrine (*vidyāpāda*), on ritual (*Kriyāpāda*), on conduct (*caryāpāda*), and on *yōga* (*yōgapāda*); but few *Āgamas* have reached us in their complete form, if indeed they ever had one. The *vidyāpāda* in particular is often missing. *Āgamas* do not focus on philosophy or doctrine; but on how devotees should conduct their lives and practice religion. The doctrine in all *Āgamas* is not homogeneous; some are dualist, others non-dualist. Their cosmogony (notably the lists of *tattvas*) also differs, as do their views on initiation. Yet all maintain that the *agamic* path must be followed in order to gain liberation or supernatural joys, which the *Vēda*, although useful in everyday life, cannot help one to attain. Most *Āgamas* contain instructions not only on cult and ritual, but also on images and temples. The *Ajita*, *Kāmika*, and *Karana* *Āgamas* are especially rich in this respect. Thus they are the fundamental source concerning architecture and iconography and a number of practical aspects of Hinduism¹⁶.

According to Śaṅkarācārya's work there were four Śaiva schools viz., *Śaiva*, *Pāśupata*, *Kārukasiddhāntin* and *Kāpālīka*. Some comparatively later *Purāṇas*, like *Śivapurāṇa*, qualifies the Śaiva schools as following the *Siddhāntamārga* and mentions the *Kālāmukha* Śaivas as *Mahāvratadharins*. The *Tantrādhikarinirṇaya* attributes to *Lingapurāṇa* a verse which refers to the sects variously as *Vāma*, *Pāśupata*, *Soma*, *Lāṅgala*, *Kāpāla Bhairava*, and *Nākula*. *Nākula* or *Lāṅgala* evidently refer to the *Lakulīśa-Pāśupatas*. The *Pāśupata* was the oldest form of Śaivism prevalent in North India. The *Mahābhārata* says that the *Pāśupata* doctrines were first preached by Śiva Śrīkaṇṭha who was probably a human teacher. Lakulīśa was probably his disciple. References to Lakulīśa, the great exponent of the *Pāśupata* sect, are found in an inscription dated C.E. 380-81, belonging to the reign of

¹⁵ Tradition has it that there are twenty-eight Śaivāgamas. Ten of these are called Śaiva, that is, "revealed by the Śivas": *Kāmika*, *Yōgaja*, *Cintya*, *Kāraṇa*, *Ajita*, *Dīpta*, *Sūksma*, *Sahasra*, *Amśumat*, *Suprabheda*. The eighteen others are *raudra*, "revealed by the Rudras": *Vijaya*, *Niśvāsa*, *Svāyambhuva*, *Anala*, *Vīra*, *Raurava*, *Makuta*, *Vimala*, *Candrajñāna*, *Bimba*, *Prodgīta*, *Lalita*, *Siddha*, *Santāna*, *Sarvokta*, *Pārameśvara*, *Kirana*, *Vātula*. See Mircea Eliade, *op.cit.*, vol. 6, p.365.

¹⁶ Mircea Eliade, *op.cit.*, vol. 6, P.365.

Chandragupta II from which it appears that he flourished in 4th century C.E in the Kathiawar region¹⁷.

One of the important streams of the ancient Pāśupata system later culminated in what may be called Āgamānta Śaivism. The Āgamānta Śaivas appear to have contributed to the development of *Tāntric* ideas in Tamiḷ Śaivism. Rājendra Cōḷa, during his expeditions in northern India, came in touch with some teachers of this school and brought them to his own country. Of these teachers Aghora-Śivācārya of the 12th century composed a valuable treatise known as *Kriyā-Karmadyotinī*. This was followed by Trilocana's *Siddhāntasārāvalī* and Nigama and Jñānadeva's *Jīrṇoddhāra dasākam*.

The Kaśmir School of Śaivism was sponsored by Vasugupta of the 9th century C.E. who is said to have derived his spiritual impulses from Śiva-Śrīkaṇṭha known as the founder of the *Āgama* literature and the author of *Śivasūtra*. The Vīraśaiva School, which flourished in the Kannada speaking areas, came into existence as a revolutionary social reform movement about the middle of the 12th century under the dynamic leadership of Basava. The Philosophy of this school is directly inspired by the twenty-eight *Śaiva Āgamas*. In the Kannada language, the *Vacanās* of Basava, and works like *Basavapurāṇa*, *ChannaBasavapurāṇa*, etc., contain much information about the philosophical tenets of this school. In Vīraśaiva system greater importance is laid on the doctrine of *Śakti* and that is why it is also called *Śaktiviśistāvaitavāta*.

Tāntric texts in their present form mostly belong to the medieval and late-medieval period. However, manuscripts of several *Tāntric* texts have been found in Gupta characters, the most important being that of *Kubjikāmata*, now in the Asiatic Society of Bengal. Copied between sixth and seventh centuries C E, according to H.P.Sastri¹⁸ this work describes about the five *Śakti Pīthas*¹⁹. The *Śaiva Āgamas* of the South are mentioned in a 7th century Kailāsanātha temple inscription of Rājasiṃhavarman. Epigraphic references to a number of *Tāntric* texts which were

¹⁷ *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXI, pp.1-9

¹⁸ R.S.Sharma "Economic and social basis of Tantrism" *Early Medieval Indian Society: A Study of Feudalisation*, Orient Longman, Delhi, 2001, pp. 235-265.

¹⁹ H. P. Sastri, 'A Catalogue of Palm-Leaf and Paper Manuscripts' quoted by R.S.Sharma, *Early Medieval Indian Society: A Study of Feudalisation*, Orient Longman, Delhi, 2001, p.247.

introduced in Cambodia as early as the beginning of the 9th century C.E exist. Besides these there are also many individual literary works on *Tantras* by *Tāntric* teachers also occupying an important place²⁰. Works on *Tāntric yōga*, on *kunḍalini*, on the science of *mantra* (*mantraśāstra*) should also be mentioned; these constitute an important group of well-known texts as *Prapañcasāra*, *Śāradātilaka*, and *Mantramahodadhi*. There are also literary or ritual compositions (*nibandha*), manuals of ritual (*paddhati*), and innumerable compilations and digests.

The Śākta Tantras

The range of the *Śākta Tantras* is wide and seeks to include, besides the works belonging to its own category, works of other *Tāntric* schools, especially the Śaiva. According to the traditional *Śākta-Tāntric* viewpoint, *Śakti* is inherent in Śiva as the power of burning is in fire. The supposed five faces of Śiva – *Īśāna*, *Tatpuruṣa*, *Sadyojāta*, *Vāmadēva* and *Aghora*-symbolise the functioning of *Śakti* in the spheres of consciousness (*cit*), bliss (*ānanda*), will (*icchā*), knowledge (*jñāna*), and action (*kriyā*) respectively. The five mouths had produced initially ten *Āgamas*²¹, which were the precursors of eighteen *Raudra Āgamas*²². All these together constitute the twenty eight *Śaiva Āgamas*. According to another tradition the southern face of Śiva represents the principle of non-duality and is called *Yoginī vaktra*. The remaining four faces represent four conditions-denotative, denoted, extinguishing and extinguished. The products from each of these combine to form the sixty-four *Bhairava Āgamas*, classed under the category of eight *Aṣṭakas*²³.

Many *Tāntric* works have been attributed to Śaṅkarācārya, of which the *Prapañcasāra* is regarded as an authoritative work in the Śākta tradition. It is written in thirty-six *patalas* and its commentary, known as *Vivarana*, is attributed to Padmapāda. *Saundaryalaharī*, a hymn to the Divine Mother, is also attributed to Śaṅkara. It has numerous commentaries of which those of Gaṅgahari and Lakṣmīdhara contain much information on different aspects of the cult of Śakti.

²⁰ N. N. Bhattacharya, *op.cit*, p. 40.

²¹ *Kāmika*, *Yōgaja*, *Cintya*, *Mukuta*, *Amsumān*, *Dīpta*, *Ajita*, *Suksma*, *Sahasra* and *Suprabeda*.

²² *Vijaya*, *Niśvāsa*, *Madgīta*, *Pārameśvara*, *Mukhavimba*, *Siddha*, *Santāna*, *Nārasimha*, *Candrāmśu*, *Vīrabhadra*, *Āgneya*, *Svayambhū*, *Visara*, *Raurava*, *Vimala*, *Kirana*, *Lalita* and *Saumeya*.

²³ For a detailed list on Sixty-four *Bhairava Āgamas*, see N. N. Bhattacharya, *op.cit*, p. 67

Śaṅkara is also said to have commented on a few *Tāntric* works like the *Śrīvidyāratnasūtra* attributed to Gaudapāda. Punyānandanātha's *Kāmakalāvilāsa* is a well known *Tāntric* treatise. Its commentary known as *Cidavallī* was written by Natanānandanātha. One of the most important *Tāntric* digests is the *Śāradātīlaka* of Lakṣmaṇa Deśika which was composed in about 11th century C.E. This celebrated work has several commentaries, the most learned and lucid of which is the *Padārthādarśa* of Rāghava Bhatta composed about the end of the 15th century²⁴.

The *Pārānandasūtra*

It is an earlier *Tāntric* work was composed in c. 900 C.E which deals with *Kuladharmā* described as the cream of the Vēdas. It holds that the Supreme Being is one and refers to seven sectarian deities – Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva, Gaṇēśa, Sūrya, Śakti and Bhairavā. According to this text, of the three ways of *sādhana* the *Dakṣiṇāmārga* is sanctioned by the *Vēdas*, the *Smrtis*, and *Purāṇas*; the *Vāmamārga* by the *Āgamas*, and the *Uttaramārga* only by the words of the *guru* or preceptor. *Vāmamārga* is of two kinds; that which insists on the *Pañca-tattva* is the better one. The *Pārānandasūtra* prescribes that the disciple has to undergo *dīkṣā* or initiation from a qualified *guru*, who should preferably be *jīvan-mukta*, i.e., one who is liberated and is not tainted in any way. The preceptor should collect the materials of the five *makāras* and hand over to the disciple a bowl for drinking wine, *mudrā* (fried cereal), and a woman (generally a courtesan). It is stated that a young woman, even a courtesan, is *Brahman*. She is Śakti incarnate. Always and in all conditions she is the purest entity. Details of *Kauladharmā* are given in this text. It describes the procedure of *Tāntric* festivals, the efficacies of *mantras* and *mudrās*, names of teachers ending in *Ānanda*, and details of sexual techniques which may appear repulsive and vulgar to many today²⁵.

The *Sabaratantra*²⁶

This is one of the early *Tāntric* texts of the Kāpālīka sect which contain significant information about the evolution of the Nātha Sect. This *Tantra* gives a list

²⁴ N. N. Bhattacharya, *op.cit*, pp. 69-70

²⁵ *ibid*, pp. 71-72

²⁶ *The Gōraksha Siddhanta Sangraha* (ed), Gopinath Kaviraj, Baroda, 1925 quoted by Lorenzen, D.N. *The Kāpālīkas and Kālamukhas: Two lost Saivite Sects*, Munshiram Manoharlal, Delhi, 1972, p.37-38.

of twelve original Kāpālīka teachers to whom the Kāpālīka doctrine was revealed. They are: Ādinātha, Anādi, Kāla, Atikālaka, Karāḷa, Vikarāḷa, Mahākāla, Kālabhairavanātha, Baṭuka, Bhūtanātha, Vīranātha, and Śrīkaṇṭha. These twelve had twelve disciples: Nāgārjuna, Jaḍabharata, Hariśchandra, Satyanātha, Bhīmanātha, Gōrakṣa, Carpaṭa, Avadya, Vairāgya, Kanthādhārin, Jalandhara, and Malayārjuna. These pupils were the original ‘promoters of the (Kāpālīka) path (*mārgappravartakas*). Several of these names recur in traditional lists of nine Nāthas and eighty-four Siddhas of the Tibetan as well as Kānpaṭā Yogis, most notably the name of Gōrakhnāth (Gōrakṣa) himself. On the basis of this statement and the common features in Kāpālīka and Kānpaṭā worship, we can conclude that the Nātha sampradaya derived much from the older Kāpālīka order, particularly in the ritual paraphernalia, philosophy and practices.

The *Kulārṇava*tantra

The *Kulārṇava* is one of the most important *Tāntric* works. It was composed probably before 11th Century C.E. According to the *Kulārṇava*, the *Kuladharmā* is the essence of the *Vēdas*. The *Kulārṇava* says that every woman is born in the *kula* of the Great Mother and hence she must be regarded as an object of veneration. Two chapters of the *Kulārṇava* are devoted to the qualifications and greatness of the *guru*. It emphasizes that the order of the succession of *gurus*, the *Āgamas*, *Āmnāya*, *mantra* and *kriya* when learnt from the lips of the right *guru* become fruitful and not otherwise. The *Kulārṇava* recommends the drinking of wine, sexual intercourse with woman, eating of flesh, etc., to the followers of Kaula doctrine, but at the same time it also endeavours to give an esoteric meaning to the five *makāras*. It refers to eighteen *Śakta Pīthas* viz., Uddiyāna, Devīkotta, Hīṅgulā, Kotimudrā, Jālandhara, Vārāṇasī, Antarvedī, Prayāga, Mithilā, Magadha, Mēkala, Aṅga, Vaṅga, Kaliṅga, Simhala, Strīrājya, Rādha and Gauda²⁷.

The *Śaradātilaka*

The *Śaradātilaka* of Lakṣmaṇa Deśikēndra is another well known work on *Tantra* which was composed in c. 11th century C.E. According to this text, Śiva is

²⁷ N. N. Bhattacharya, *op.cit*, pp. 72-73.

both *nirguṇa* and *saguṇa*, the two aspects being conceived in terms of difference from and identical with *Prakṛti*. When Śiva is identical with Śakti or Prakṛti, he is *saguṇa*. From Śakti or Prakṛti evolves *nāda* (*apara*) and from this *nāda* arises *bindu*. The latter is subdivided into *bindu* (*apara*), *bīja* and *nāda* (*para*). The first is again identified with Śiva, the second with Śakti and third with both in identical relation. Śakti, also called *Parā-śakti* and *Parā-dēvatā*, is conceived as *Śabda-brahma* that flashes like lightning in the *ādhāra-cakra* and assumes the form of *Kuṇḍalini* in the human body. From Śiva in the form of the said *bindu* of the *apara* category come out in succession Sadāśiva, Īśa, Rudra, Viṣṇu and Brahmā. The Sāṅkhya categories also are traced to the *bindu*. The all-pervading and at the same time the most subtle Śakti remains coiled like a serpent in her *Kulakuṇḍalini* form and becomes manifest in the form of the fifty letters of the Sanskrit alphabet.

The *Mahānirvāṇatantra*

The *Mahānirvāṇatantra* is a late but important work containing much of the earlier tradition representing the best and the sophisticated *Tāntric* tradition²⁸. It has been regarded by scholars as a ‘refined’ work. The present form of the text is not much earlier than the 18th century and it is burdened with *Vēdantic* elements, but there are reasons to believe that the text had an older form. Because, often the term ‘*nirvāṇa*’ employed by the Buddhists. At the same, *Vēdantic* ideas were interpolated, pure *Tāntric* ritualistic aspects were modified, and it was fashioned in such a way that it would appeal to the Hindu taste in general. Besides, it puts forward the *Vēdantic* conception that the Supreme Being is one, without a second. He is *Brahman* who is beyond the three *guṇas* viz., *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda*.

The *Mahānirvāṇa* upholds Śakta monotheism with Durgā as the highest *prakṛiti* who is also known by the names of *Mahāvidyā* and equated with *Lakṣmī*, *Śarasvatī* and *Śakti*. The *Mahānirvāṇa* frankly states that the *Vēdas*, *Purāṇas* and *Śastras* are hardly of any use in the *Kaliyuga* that perfection cannot be attained without following the *Kula* practices and that the rituals of Five ‘*M*’s are necessary. In

²⁸ N. N. Bhattacharya.*op.cit.*, p. 69. The work was first published by the Ādi Brahmo Samaj. The preface stated that three manuscripts were consulted to prepare the edition-one belonging to the library of the Samāj, the second supplied by Sri Durgadas Chaudhuri, and the third taken from the library of Raja Rammohan Roy.

the *cakra* rituals the Five ‘M’s of *tattvas* like wine, etc., should be collected and placed in front of the goddess and then properly performed. The text also gives a detailed description of the *Bhairavi-Cakra*, *Tattva-Cakra*, and *Sri-Cakra*. In all these three, Sexual intercourse is prescribed under the supervision and permission of the *Guru*. Besides the above, other common features of *Tāntric* texts have also been elaborately discussed²⁹.

Other Śakta Tantras

The *Paraśurāmakalpasūtra* is an earlier work composed in c.1300 C.E. Its commentary is known as *Saubhāgayodaya* written by Rāmeśvara. The special features of this work are the *āmnāya* classifications, insistence on the secrecy of the knowledge conveyed by the preceptor and worship of the five *makāras*, thirty-six *tattvas* including those of the *Sāṅkhya* system, *āsana*, *maṇḍapa*, *kuṇḍa*, *maṇḍala*, *dīkṣā*, etc. It states that after initiation the preceptor is to give a name to the disciple which should have the suffix ‘Ānandanātha’.

The *Jñānārṇava-tantra*, considered to be one of the foremost textual compositions of the worship of *Srividya* emphasizes the worship of ‘*Tripuri*’ who is identified as the embodiment of ‘*Jñāna*’ (knowledge/wisdom); Consisting of 26 Chapters (*Patalas*) the text describes the functioning of the *cakras* or nerve plexes within the body and the wonderful power of the various *mudrās*, *yantras* and *Bīja mantras* in the worship of *Sridēvi/Tripuri/Gāyatri* and other forms of the supreme mother such as *Bhairavi*, *Aṇṇapurṇa* etc. It also describes different rituals such as *Sricakra maṇḍala Pūjā*, *Aṣṭa siddha pūjā*, *Ratna Pūjā*, *Kumari Pūjā*, etc. It analyses the significance of *Nāda* and *Bindu* and the principle of non-duality also. It also describes the significance of different *yantras* in attaining the desired wishes of the devotee. It states that at the time of initiation the guru has to instruct the disciple regarding the six *cakras*, together with the number of petals in each, the colour of each, and the letter with the alphabet (*bījākṣara*) assigned to each.

The *Kaulāvalinirṇaya* was composed by Jñānāndagiri on twenty-one *ullāsas*. It gives a list of *Tāntric* works including the *Yāmala*s and names eight *Tāntric gurus*.

²⁹ N. N. Bhattacharya, *op.cit*, pp. 74-76

It deals mainly with the *Kulamārga* with emphasis on the rituals of Five ‘M’s. Women are highly praised in this work as manifestation of the Great Mother. It is interesting to note that the *Kaulāvalinirṇaya* offers various substitutes for the Five ‘M’s. It lays supreme emphasis on sexual union. It also describes in detail the *mantrasiddhi* or *śavasāadhanā* in which the aspirant has to perform rituals with a corpse.

The *Akulavīra Tantra* is said to have been revealed by Mīṇanātha (Matsyēndranātha) himself. It is a small text containing some statements on *Tāntric Yōga*. One manuscript dates back to 13th Century C.E and its origin is Kāmarūpa (Assam). Another manuscript of the same belongs to 9th Century C.E³⁰.

Jayadrathayamala is an important work containing 24,000 stanzas divided into four parts. The manuscript of the fourth part is datable to 12th Century C.E, while those of other parts seem to be later interpolations. Chapter 35 and 36 entitled *sambhandāvatāra* and *sūtra-nirṇaya* have some importance in the history of *tantra*. The latter one names the *tantras* of different traditions. Chapter 41 deals with *yāmala*, *maṅgaḷa*, *Aṣṭaka* and the genealogies of the teachers (*guru parampara*) who taught the *tantra*³¹.

The *Rudrayāmala* is an extensive work in sixty-six chapters and has over 6,000 verses. One of the important features of this work is that it contains a panegyric of *Atharva Vēda* saying that all gods, all beings, all sages along with *Kāmaavidyā* and *Mahāvidyā* dwell in it. It deals with the mysterious *Kuṇḍalini*, *Yōgic* practices, and the six *cakras* in the body. It also prescribes sexual union and the use of wine; it states that a *vīra* should drink wine and use a beautiful woman who is capable of arousing sexual passion. It also mentions about some important *Śakta Pīthas*.

The *Śaktisaṅgamantra* holds that *Kulācāra* in general is nothing but the cult of Śakti in any of her forms and aspects, but its peculiarity is a special form of worship done with wine, flesh, fish, cereals and sexual union. The knowledge conveyed by the guru and the worship with five *makāras* should be kept in secrecy. It is interesting to

³⁰ S. C. Banerji, *A Companion to Tantra*, op.cit., p.121

³¹ Bagchi, P.C., *Op.cit.* pp.109-114.

note that the *Śaktisaṅgamantra* states that the Devī manifests herself for the destruction of the Buddhist and other heretical sects, for the removal of the confusing admixture of different cults, and for the establishment of true religion. The *Śaktisaṅgamantra* is divided into four parts viz., *Kālī*, *Tārā*, *Sundarī* and *Chinnamastā*. It was composed sometime between 16th - 17th centuries C.E.

The *Yōni Tantra*³² is another work from the Kāmarūpa region (Assam) which highlights the worship of *yōni* (female genital organ) and the consumption of *Yōni tattva*. Containing 8 chapters (*patalas*) this work of an anonymous author describes the methods of worship of the *yōni*, the significance of the *Yōni tattva* and the benefits of its consumption and use in the *kaulachara* ritual, description of the *Dasa Mahavidyas*, characteristic features of an *Avadhuta*, reverence to women and the methods and time of their worship, use of *pañcatattvas* by the *virabhava*, techniques of *virasadhana* etc.

The *Kaulajñānanirṇaya* is an important *Tāntric* work belonging to the *Nātha* tradition, supposed to have been composed by *Matśyēndranātha* who was the founder of one of the *Kaula* schools called *Yōgini-kaula*. The doctrines of this school, as may be gathered from this text, have something in common with the Buddhist *Tantras* of the *Sahajiyā* class. H.P. Sastri assigned the manuscript of this work to the 9th century C.E, but P.C. Bagchi placed it in the middle of the 11th century C.E. It is divided into 24 sections and deals mainly with meaning of *kula*, practices prescribed for a *kaula*, the principle *Akulavira*, relation between *śiva-śakti*, *Bindu*, *nāda*, *mōkṣa*, mode of worship, means of acquisition of powers by which one can kill others and enjoy long life. *Kula* is defined as the condition in which the mind and the sight of the devotee merge and the senses lose their independence, the devotee's own power becomes one with *jīva*, and his sight merges into the visible objects. *Kula* is identical with *Śakti*, who merges into *Śiva*, *Śiva* into action (*kriya*), *Kriya* into *Jñāna I* (knowledge), through *icchā* (desire) which merges finally into supreme *Śiva*. *Mukti* (liberation) can be achieved with the perfect knowledge of *Śiva*. A liberated man can liberate others³³.

³² Magee, Micheal, (Trans.), *The Yoni Tantra*, Worldwide Tantra Project, Vol. II, U.K., 1995.

³³ Bagchi, P.C., *Studies in the Tantras and Caryagiti-Kosa of Buddhist Siddhas*, University of Calcutta, Calcutta, 1939.

The *Gōrakṣa-siddhānta-saṃgraha* is another important *Tāntric* text which says that the *Kaula Tantras* were introduced on earth by the nine *Nātha* teachers. It is a collection of short tracts of the *Nātha* sect such as *Matsyēndranāth*, *Gōrakṣanāth*, *Jālandharanātha* and *Bhṛtrhari* etc. This work discusses such important topics as non-discrimination of people on the basis of caste; nature and importance of *yōga*; description of *Avadhūta*; salvation resulting from the attainment of *Nāthahood*; description of the *Kāpālīka tantra*; definition of *paramahamsa*; denunciation of the enjoyment of prostitutes; characteristics of goodmen; *ācāra* or *Tāntric* mode of worship etc³⁴.

The *Gōrakṣa Sataka*³⁵ is an important as well as a basic text of the *Nāthasiddha* School³⁶. Both the *Nātha* cult and *Vajrayāna* had a fundamental unity in their esoteric aspects. *Jālandhari*, better known as *Hādi-pā* wrote some treatises in Sanskrit on *Tāntric* cults, such as *Vajrayōginīsādhana*, *Śuddhivajrapradīpa* (a gloss on *Hevajrasādhana*) *Śricakra-sambhara-garbha-tattva-vidhi* and *Humkāra-cittavindu-bhāvana-krama*. These are mentioned in *Taṇjāvūr* catalogue. From the same source we learn that *Ācārya Chaurāṅgī* composed a *Yōgic* work under the title *Vāyutattvopadeśa*³⁷.

The *Gōrakṣa-vachana-saṃgraha* is also believed to be a medieval Sanskrit word consisting of the summaries of the discourses of *Gōrakṣanātha*³⁸ encompassing such complex philosophical ideas such as non-duality of God, *Śiva* and *Śakti*, evolution of the cosmic body of *Śiva*, non-duality of *jīvātma* and *paramātma*, the secrets of premial sound, breath, *samādhi*, *sadaṅga yōga*; characteristics of an *avadhūta yōgi*³⁹. The editor in his lengthy explanation discuss some portions of

³⁴ Kaviraj, Gopinath (ed.), *The Gōrakṣa Siddhanta Saṃgraha* and *The Siddha Siddhanta Saṃgraha* of Balabhadra, University of Burdwan, Calcutta, 1966.

³⁵ An English translation of the original text of *Gōrakṣa Sataka* is found in the scholarly work of G.W. Briggs, *op.cit*, pp. 284-304.

³⁶ These works belong to a slightly earlier period than the *Tirumandiram*. For more details see R. Venkatraman, *A History of the Tamil Siddha Cult*, Ennes Publications, Madurai, 1990

³⁷ N. N. Bhattacharya, *op.cit*, pp. 78-79

³⁸ A.K. Banerjea edited this work with a detailed description and explanation of the discourses under the title *Philosophy of Gōrakṣanāth*, Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi, 1999. As an appendix he gives the original Sanskrit text consisting of 175 couplets.

³⁹ “*Prasaram bhāsate Śaktih samkocam bhāsate Śivah/ Tayoryōgasya kartā yah sa bhavet Siddha-yogirāt./ Viśwātītam yathā viśwam ekam eva virājate / Samyogena sadā yas tu Siddha-Yogi bhavet tu sah. / Paripurna-prasannātmā sarvāsarva-padoditah / Viśuddho nirbharānandah sa bhavet Siddha-yogirat.*” (“a perfectly enlightened *siddha-yogi* lives in the embodied state amidst all kinds of mundane

another Sanskrit work ‘*Siddha Siddhāntha Paddathi*’, also ascribed to Gōrakṣanātha⁴⁰.

Haṭhayōgapradīpikā is a *Tāntric-Haṭha-Yōga* treatise written by Cintāmaṇi, who was a hermit, took the name of Svātmārāma and attained the title, Yogindra. He knows a long list of Yogis who preceded him, more than twenty-four in all. The book therefore is fairly late which probably belongs to 15th century and contains 382 verses arranged in four chapters. The verses in the *Gōrakṣa-śataka* are found, verbatim or in substance, scattered in the *Haṭhayōgapradīpikā*. Portions of it are found in the commentary, as well as in the text of *Gōrakṣa Paddhati*. Therefore, it may be considered as an elaboration of earlier works of the school⁴¹. The *Haṭhayōgapradīpikā* (I, 5-9) contains a list of ‘great Siddhas’. Some names tend to appear with greater frequency in various sources. In North India, aside from Maṭṣyēndranāth and Gōrakhnāth, the most important Siddhas are Nāgārjuna and the other alchemists. As in the South, there are a few names which tend to reappear again and again: Agastya, Tirumūlar, Śivavākkiyar. The number eighty four (Siddhas) current in the North is as ‘unhistorical’ as the number eighteen in the South; both are mystical numbers well attested in Indian tradition⁴².

Nava Nātha Bhakthi Sāra

Nava Nātha Bhakthi Sāra is one of the popular Marathi literary works on *Nava Nātha* cult. It was written by a Maharashtra poet Mālu in Marathi language in 1319 C.E. It is believed that he is one among the persons who popularized the *Nava Nātha* cult in south India around 14th century C.E. The *Nava Nātha Bhakthi Sāra* is considered to be the most authentic work which is still being followed in the

circumstances with undimmed and undisturbed *Śiva-consciousness*, and enjoys in this world of bondages, sorrows and struggles perfect freedom.... To him this world is, empirically speaking, transformed into a *mukti*”). *Ibid.* pp. 248-249.

⁴⁰ G.W. Briggs, *op.cit.*, p.255

⁴¹ G.W. Briggs, *op.cit.*, p.253; see also Mircea Eliade, 2009 Edn, *op.cit.*, pp.229-230 The verses were translated into English in 1915 by Pañcam Sinha and printed at Allahabad in the series known as ‘*The Sacred Books of the Hindus*’.

⁴² Kamil.V.Zelebil, *The Poets of Powers*, p.28

Maharashtra and Karnāṭaka regions. Translations of this work are also available in many other Indian languages⁴³.

Nava Nātha Charitra

Nava Nātha Charitra is one of the important and popular works in Telugu. *Nava Nātha Charitra* was written by a Telugu poet Gaurana in *dvipatha* style. He wrote this work at the command of the chief pontiff of the *Siddha Bikṣa Vritti Matha* of Śrisailam. Gaurana himself mentions that his work is a copy of the work by one of his predecessors, poet Śrigiri. Though the original work of Śrigiri is not available, it is already famous by the time of another Telugu poet Jakkanna who lived between 1380 and 1440 C.E. Jakkanna mentions Śrigiri in his work *Vikramarka Caritramu*. Jakkanna was a younger contemporary of Śri Nātha who belongs to the 14th century C.E. Similarly, the inscription which mentions about the pontiff of *Bikṣhavritti Matha* is dated about 1445 C.E. Therefore it is right to say that Gaurana belongs to the 15th century C.E. The *Nava Nātha Charitra* in Telugu and Marathi versions speaks about Raja Narendra, a king of the Malwa Dēśa. The Telugu people identified him with the Eastern Chalukyan king Rajaraja Narendra. Apart from these, the Marathi version mentions about various sacred places, of which the *Kadali Dēśa* is, identified with the sacred place of the same name in the Nallamalai hills like Śrisailam and the contiguous regions of Karnāṭaka and Maharashtra. *Nava Nātha Charitra* speaks about the regions of the Kṛṣṇa-Tuṅgabhadra valley in its many stories. It was the Siddha Nagārjuna an alchemist of Śrisailam spread the message of *Nava Nāthas* in South India⁴⁴.

Śaiva-Siddhānta of South India

South Indian Śaivism harks back to pre-Christian times, too contains *Tāntric* elements. The edifice of Śaiva Siddhānta rests on the pillars of two main traditions, one *Vēdic* and other *Āgamic*. The works of this school are written in Sanskrit as well as in Tamil. In this school, twenty eight *Āgamas* are recognized. The most authoritative of which according to this school, is *Kāmikāgama*. Śaiva devotional

⁴³ N. Chandramouli, 'Siddha Cult In South India: Representations In Art And Their Ramifications', (Paper presented in the International Seminar on 'World Religions after September 11th: An Asian Perspective' Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, 17-19, January, 2009)

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* see also Obi Reddy, K. *Navanātha Charitra: A Literary Critique* (in Telugu), Anantapur, 1995.

literature spread over a few centuries from the 5th to the 9th century C.E. These devotional songs of the Śaiva saints who were popularly known as *Nāyaṇmars*, laid the basis of Tamil Śaivism as an organized religio-philosophical entity. Nambi Āṇḍār Nambi (1000 C.E.) is well-known as a compiler of Śaiva hymns, collectively called *Tirumuṟai*. Sekkīrār's *Periapurānam* (11th century) which containing the biographies of sixty three Śaiva saints, is of considerable value in the history of southern Śaivism⁴⁵.

Meikaṇḍar's *Śiva-jñāna-bōdham* (13th century) is the first attempt at a systematic statement of the tenets of Tamil Śaivism and also an authoritative exposition of the doctrines of this school. This is a short treatise of a dozen of aphorisms (*sūtras*) which seem to have been translated from a Sanskrit original. The author has added *vārttikas* of his own which explain and illustrate the argument of each of the *sūtras*. Śivajñāna-muṇivar, the commentator on the *sūtras* says that they form part of the *Raurava-āgama*. The next important one is Meikaṇḍar's disciple, Arulnandi Śivācārya who wrote the renowned work, *Śiva-jñāna-siddhiyār*. Then Mānavāśagaṅgadandār's *Uṇmai-vilakkam* is a catechism which claims to reveal the essence of all *Āgamas*. Umāpati-Śivācārya (14th century) was the author of eight works of which the *Śivappirākāsam*, *San̄karpa-nirākaranam*, and *Uṇmai-nēri-vilakkam* are the most important. Well-known among the works of Umāpati are the *Śivaprakāsam* and *Tiru-arulpayan*⁴⁶. The two aforesaid traditions were sought to be syncretised by Nīlakaṇṭha (14th century) who interpreted the *Brahma-sūtra* in the light of the Śaiva system. Generally agreeing with Rāmānuja, he raises his voice of protest against the absolute identity or absolute distinction between God on the one hand, and the souls and the world on the other. Śiva, with his consort, Ambāl, is the Supreme, having as His body both the conscious and unconscious entities. Of great value is Appaya Dīkṣita's commentary, called *Śivārka-maṇidīpikā*⁴⁷.

The three crucial concepts, forming the corner-stone of this system, are *Pati*, *Paśu* and *Pāśa*. Śiva is *Pati* (Lord). To him belong the *Paśus* (literally cattle), the

⁴⁵ S.C. Banerji, *op.cit*, p. 480

⁴⁶ Also See Thamizhannal, *Puthiya Nōkkil Tamil Ilakkiya Varalāru*, (Tamil), Meenatchi Puthaka Nilayam, Madurai, 2011 (11th Rep.), p. 307

⁴⁷ S.C. Banerji, *op.cit*, p. 481; see also N. N. Bhattacharya, *op.cit*, pp. 52-53

endless host of souls. *Pāśas* (fettters) are distinguished as *avidyā*, *karma* and *māyā*. *Avidyā* is *ānavamala* or the impurity caused by the false notion of the soul that it is finite. *Karma* is the cause of the connection of the conscious soul with the unconscious body. *Māyā* is the basis of all impurities. This school does not recognize the illusory conception of the world. It has a serious moral purpose to serve. The rhythm of the world, regulated by the law of *Karma*, continues to exist for the single purpose of attracting man to the higher life; God is ever intent on attaining the *summum bonum*, must be free from the above threefold sin or impurity.

The *Tiruvāsagam* poetically describes the progress of the soul from bondage to liberation which does not mean becoming one with God, but enjoying His presence. After snapping the *pāśas*, one becomes like Śiva though the functions of creation etc. are prerogative of the Lord. The *jīvanmukta* feels identified with the Supreme Being. In this system, as we learn from the *Siddhiyar* xii. 2, quoted in the *Siddhānta-dīpikā*, no love of God is possible without love of mankind. The time-honoured caste-restrictions have been done away with. Says Tirumūlar (*Tirumantiram*) that there is only one caste as there is one God. Basava (middle of 12th century) revolted against Brāhmanical supremacy and the conventional concept of re-birth has also been rejected⁴⁸.

Kāmikāgama

The *Kāmikāgama*, belonging to the *Siddhānta* School of South Indian Śaivism, is a metrical work in two parts, *Pūrvabhāga* and *Uttarabhāga*. The *Pūrvabhāga* itself consists of seventy five *Paṭala* (chapters). Apart from ritual matters, the *Kāmikāgama* also concerned with temple-architecture, consecration, priests, devotees and a little of philosophical ideas. The *Śaiva Āgamas* are valuable sources of information about Śaivite temples – from the selection of the site up to the installation of images. Thus, *Kāmikāgama* is important in the *Tāntric* as well as cultural history of India⁴⁹.

⁴⁸ S.C. Banerji, *op.cit*, pp. 481-82

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* pp. 482-83

Mataṅga-Pārameśvarāgama

This work is an *Upāgama* of the *Pāramēśvara*, the twenty sixth of the twenty eight *Āgamas* of the Śaiva Siddhānta school. It is divided into four sections (*pāda*), viz., *Vidyā*, *Kriyā*, *Yōga*, *Caryā*. The *Vidyāpāda* has a commentary by Rāmakantha, son of Nārāyaṇakantha. This section is stated to contain 1,500 verses. In the printed edition, we find 1,537 stanzas. The *Kriyāpāda* is stated to consist of 1000 verses. The editor informs us that, in the extant manuscripts, there are 983 stanzas. The *Yōgapāda*, stated to contain 500 verses, now contains 428 stanzas. The *Caryāpāda*, stated to contain 500 verses, exists in 470 stanzas⁵⁰.

Śata-Ratṇa-Samgraha

It was compiled with a commentary by Umāpati Śivācārya, a well-known teacher of Śaiva philosophy of his time. He flourished in South India in the 13th-14th century C.E. He was the founder of the famous *Chidambara Matha* and the images of Chidambarēśvara and Kāmēśvari, the presiding deities of the temple, were installed by him. He authored several works and also wrote eight treatises on *Śaiva Siddhāntā Śāstra* in Tamiḷ. It precisely deals with Śaiva philosophy including its underlying ethics and religion. It also attempts to harmonize the different ideals of self-realisation and to restrain their extravagance. Intellectual apprehension of the *tattvas*, strenuous self-sacrifice, unflinching observances, rituals and *Yōgic* practices are all regarded as effective methods of approach to Śiva⁵¹.

Tiruman[t]diram

The earliest reference to and treatment of the Siddha cult is found only in the *Tirumandiram*⁵². It is the only source book of the *Sanmārgasiddha* School⁵³, and also a major work in Tamiḷ on *Tantra-sāstra*. Tirumūlar's *Tirumandiram* consisting of 3000 short verses have been classified by Nambi as the Tenth Book of the Śaiva

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* p. 483

⁵¹ S.C. Banerji, *op.cit.*, p. 486

⁵² Chapter (*tandirams*) III and IV of *Tirumandiram*

⁵³ Though it deals with almost all the salient features of the Siddha cult, its tacit purpose is to establish the superiority of the *Sanmārgasiddha* School; see *Tirumandiram*, verse No. 1487

Canon⁵⁴. The name of the book itself is significant: it is a mantra, mystic utterance. Tirumūlar is considered to be the first of the Siddha. He gives out the experience both in a classical language and in the language of the masses; the ecstatic outpourings of a Siddha are also there in his work⁵⁵. This seminal Tamil work is the first treatise which deals with the different aspects of the *Kuṇḍalini-yōga*, under the name of *Śiva-Yōga*. Some new mystic expressions which were not found in earlier literatures, introduced for the first time by Tirumūlar.

The Siddha view of the body as a *mokśa sādhana* acquired a unique importance which it had never before attained in the spiritual history of Tamil Nadu. Tirumūlar also introduced the concept of the twilight language as *sūnya-sambāsanai*, which is a unique mode of expression in Tamil. In this work, Tirumūlar says that the purity of the *jīva* can be attained through *pāsa* or attachment itself. He says that one can rid of *pāsa* by *pāsa* itself. He also expresses the same idea by calling it the wisdom's way. His *Pariyaṅga-Yōga* is an expression of this basic concept of *Tantra*. Above all, this work deals with how one may live a divine life in the midst of the worldly one. It fulfills the meaning of the word '*Tantra*' a 'web' which joins the spiritual and the material dimensions of life⁵⁶.

In one of the autobiographical verses found in the prologue of the text, Tirumūlar states that having daily contemplated Śiva wearing a crescent moon, he began to compose the *āgama*. He also maintains that he was renowned for his capabilities for enunciating a *Śivāgama*. This is supported by Verse 101 which states that Mūlan delivered a beautiful *āgamic* discourse in three thousand verses, grouped into nine *tantras*. However, the text distances itself from the establishment of temple and temple ritual, the focal points of the *āgamas* of Southern Śaivism⁵⁷.

⁵⁴ The Śaiva Canon consists of twelve books popularly known as Panniru Tirumuṟai in Tamil, collected and compiled by Nambi Āṇḍār Nambi, a contemporary of Rājārāja Cōlā I.

⁵⁵ M. Arunachalam, *An Introduction to the History of Tamil Literature*, Gandhi Vidyalayam, Tiruchitrambalam, 1974, pp.143-144

⁵⁶ T.N. Ganapathy, *The Contribution of Tamil Siddhas to Dravidian Thought*, Dravidian University, Kuppam, 2008, p.18

⁵⁷ Maithili Thayanithy, *The Concept of Living Liberation in the Triumandiram*, Ph.D Thesis, Centre for the Study of Religions, University of Toronto, 2010, pp.78-80

It is to be noted that the *Tirumandiram* speaks of the Nava Nāthas or the nine Nāthasiddhas⁵⁸, as the foremost leaders in the path of penance. To some extent, the *Tirumandiram* played a dual role as (i) it was the pioneer of the Siddha cult in Tamiḷnādu and (ii) it gave a temporary respite to this cult by criticizing the *Yōga* of the Siddhas in favour of *Bhakti* as a sure means of God realization and thus generating a revivalism of the devotional Śaivism⁵⁹.

The Siddhar Periya Nānakkōvai

‘The Siddhas were revolutionaries from the Śaiva fold; they revolted from everything orthodox and ritualistic; they have left behind a substantial volume of good poetry, which employs the spoken language with power and banter to ridicule orthodox beliefs and customs; it had a tremendous effect on the masses’⁶⁰.

There is quite a decent volume of Siddha literature available in Tamiḷ language. The poems of those Siddhas are said to have been collected into a handy volume known as the *Pathinen Siddhar jñāna kōvai*; but the volume is not real siddha poetry. There are in it large sections of modern writing in prose and verse which will hardly fit in with the Siddha writings⁶¹. Besides, the British Museum library contains a large number of manuscripts of *cittar* works. The Mackenzie Collection⁶² contains a long list of items connected directly or indirectly with the Siddhar. For e.g. Agastya’s *autobiography* and a list of thirty eight works ascribed to him. *Agastya Vyākarna* described as ‘a short grammar of the Tamiḷ language attributed to the sage Agastya, but the genuine works is supposed not to be in existence’⁶³.

⁵⁸ For more details about the Nava Nāthasiddhas, see S. B. Das Gupta, *Obscure Religious Cults*, p. 206.

⁵⁹ For more details see R. Venkatraman, *op.cit.*, pp. 45, 48

⁶⁰ M. Arunachalam, *op.cit.*, p. 209

⁶¹ *Ibid*, p. 261

⁶² British Museum Library No.620. g.34. For further details see Kamil V. Zvelebil, *The Smile of Murugan on Tamil Literature of South India*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1973, in foot notes, p. 218

⁶³ It also seems that Det Kongelige Bibliotek in Copenhagen contains under Cod. Tamoul 10, 39 and 48 some *Cittar* texts viz. *Rāmatēvar Pātal*, *Akattiya Cūttiram*, and *Cittar pātaltirattu*. The more interesting and promising items in the British Museum may be found under the following numbers: Orient. 1008 - Magic; Orient. 1048 - Medical; Orient. 5004, Orient.11726, and especially, Orient. 11727 - Śivavākkiyar; Orient. 11729 - Rāmatēvar; Orient. 11736 - Śivavākkiyar; further Orient. 11736.15.A.C. and Orient 11727.15. A.C. For further details see Kamil V. Zvelebil, (1973), *Op.cit.*, in foot notes, p. 218.

All the Siddhas are a group of mystics who revolt against caste and rituals and the established order of religion. They are no doubt *bhaktas* but their *bhakti* is of a different type. They are very critical of the practice of religion but always hold fast to the one Supreme God and pray for His Grace. Their revolt is only in the manner of their criticism and the challenge they throw to orthodoxy. They are generally against idol worship and they emphasize the worship of God in the heart. Except few, all the Siddhas have been Śaivas⁶⁴.

Based on their aims, Siddhas are classified under three broad groups viz., (i) the Sanmārga Siddhas, (ii) the Nānasiddhas and (iii) the Kāyasiddhas. However, there is also another group forms the fourth one, who are ‘a few siddha-like’ poets who have been appended to the Siddha school by posterior generations, or who called themselves cittar or Siddhas without properly belonging to the esoteric group itself⁶⁵.

The *Siddhar Periya Nānakkōvai* is an anthology of seventy nine songs by three groups of authors; such as 1. the nine Nānasiddhas, 2. nine Siddha like poets and 3. a few authors assuming the names of Gods, sages and poets⁶⁶. Among them thirty two songs by nine Nānasiddhas constitute as the source book for the Nānasiddha School⁶⁷. This popular work is available with many different editions⁶⁸. However, the ‘*Siddhar Pātalgaḷ*’ edited by Tha. Kovendhan (2001) is followed in this thesis⁶⁹.

With regard to the two primary sources mentioned above viz., *Tirumandiram* and the *Siddhar Periya Nānakkōvai* there are two major difficulties. They are (i) no internal evidence in these works gives us any historical information, least of all dates

⁶⁴ M. Arunachalam, *Op.cit*, p. 264.

⁶⁵ R. Venkatraman, *Op.cit*, p.7.

⁶⁶ For e.g., Gods like Śiva and Subramaṇia; sages like Vālmīki and Agattiyar; and with the names of Kāyasiddhas like Koṅṇaṇar, Saṭṭaimuṇi, Karuvūrār and Rāmadēvar; and poets like Vaḷḷuvar and Tirumūlar.

⁶⁷ For further details see R. Venkatraman, *op.cit*, p. 14

⁶⁸ There are also many earlier editions are available for e.g. Ramalinga Mudaliyar (1899) in two volumes; M.V. Venugopala Pillai (1974), and another work edited by Aru. Ramanathan’s which includes *Śivayōgasāram*, a prose work, which is a Tamil translation by Puranānandar of the Hindi work, on Rāja Yōga by one Gurucarandās Bābaji, a follower of Gurunānak. Besides the above editions mentioned above, many paperback editions, reprinted several times are available in the market.

⁶⁹ Tha. Kovendhan, *Siddhar Pātalgaḷ*, Poompukar Pathipagam, Chennai in 2001, (6th edition). This work includes the collected songs of thirty-three Tamil Siddhas with a brief introduction to them and also it ended with an appendix on glossary of important words.

of events or biodata of persons⁷⁰; and (ii) the literature was not written to provide material for future historians, but for other contemporary purposes of a non-historical nature, perhaps necessary for those times. Even so, the theological and metaphysical content will be useful for this thesis since it is interested in these also. The difficulties inherent in utilizing this kind of literature straight away as a source for history are obvious⁷¹.

From the *Kāyasiddha* School we have hundreds of *Tāntric* works dealing with one or more of the following, viz., alchemy, black magic, medicine, *yōga* and certain *Tāntric* religious rituals. The corpus of this literature is unwieldy and scattered. Though the academic world has not yet taken serious note of the total corpus of this literature, certain scholars⁷² have expressed doubts about the genuineness of the innumerable works attributed to *Agattiyar* especially those on medicine⁷³. Although we find large scale interpolations in these works, but at the core the *Kāyasiddha* material is discernible beneath all the layers of late accretions. For instance, the *Tirumandiram* contains all the features peculiar to the *Kāyasiddhas*, and it helps one as a touchstone in determining this core. But, being highly technical, the materials of this school cannot be easily handled by the uninitiated.

Siddhar Pādalgaḷ

This edited volume in Tamil is a collection of songs of popular Tamil Siddhas. Nearly songs of thirty three Siddhas are collected in this work. Of these thirty three, the first sixteen are classified under the General list, and the songs of Nandīśvarar, Rāmadēvar and Karuvūrār are classified under the *Pūjā Vithi*, and the rest of fourteen Siddhas are classified under the *Ñāna Pādalgaḷ* or intellectual songs. The numbers of songs of those Siddhas in general lists are as follows: Śivavākkīyar – 512, Avvaiyar – 310, collection of Paṭṭiṇathar's songs with various sub-titles, Bhadrāgiriya – 231, Agapēy Siddhar – 90, Aḷugani Siddhar – 40, Itaikkāttu Siddhar – 124, Kaduveli

⁷⁰ The little data which are gleaned from the *Tirumandiram* are highly exaggerated; e.g., the author says 'I lived for seventy million *yugas*' *Tirumandiram*, verse 74; also see, Tha. Kovendhan, *op.cit*, *Pāmbāṭṭi Siddhar Pādal*, verse 25-39.

⁷¹ R. Venkatraman, *op.cit*, p.15.

⁷² M. Arunachalam, *Tamil Ilakkiya Varalaru, 14th century*, (Tamil) p. 345

⁷³ P. Mohammad Abdullah Saheb: *Anuboha Vaidya Navanitam*, Introduction, p. iii

Siddhar – 34, Pāmbāṭṭi Siddhar – 129, Kudambai Siddhar – 32, Koṅgaṇar – 111, Pīr Mohamed – 63, Vālaisamy – 185, Ulogāyutha Siddhar – 28, Enāti Siddhar – 4, and Kālai Siddhar – 3. Under the *Pūjā Vithi*, Nandīśvarar - 12, Rāmadēvar - 10 and Karuvūrār – 30 are given. Under the *Ñāna Pādalgaḷ* list, Shēśa Yōgi – 17, Tiruvaḷḷuvar – 19, Saṭṭaimuṇi – 103 (under *Ñānam* 1) and 101 (under *Ñānam* 2), Gaṇapathy Siddhar – 99, Agattiyar – 48, Romariṣi – 13, Tirumūlar – 11, Subramaṇiyar – 32, Vālmīgar – 16, Kāgapusuṇḍar – 79 in first section, 65 in second section, and 16 under *Kuṛaḷ Veṇba*, Sūryānandar – 13, Paṭṭiṇa Siddhar – 100, Kārai Siddhar – 28, and Tadaṅgan Siddhar – 11 songs are given⁷⁴.

Besides the above, there are several works available in Tamil which are said to be written by the Tamil Siddhas. For instance, a Tamil work entitled ‘*Śiva Mayam Kanda Siddhargal*’ by Gānamanjari Sambathkumar⁷⁵, gives a hagiological account of eighteen known and thirty seven unknown Siddhas and their miracles. It also gives a list of works in Tamil, which are said to be written by particular Siddhas, without any proper evidences or references. Some the works are given as follows.

Agattiyar: *Agattiyar Vaithiya Ratna Surukkam* 360, *Agattiyar Vāgada Veṇba*, *Agattiyar Vaithiya Kombi*, *Vaithiya Ratnāgaram*, *Vaithiya Kaṇṇādi*, *Vaithiyam* 1500, *Vaithiyam* 4600, *Sendhūran* 300, *Mani* 4000, *Vaithiya Sinthāmaṇi*, *Karpa Sūthiram*, *Āyul Vēda Bhaśyam*, *Vaithiya Nūlgaḷ Pēruntirattu*, *Pasmam* 200, *Nādi śastra Pakśini*, *Karisil Paspam* 200 are some of his works on medicine. *Śivajālam*, *Sakthi Jālam*, *Śaṇmuga Jālam*, *Āreluthu Antāti*, *Karmavyapagam*, *Vidhinūn Mūvagai Kāṇdam*, *Agattiyar Pūjā Vithi*, *Agattiyar Sūthiram* 30 are some of his philosophical works⁷⁶. *Agattiyar Kāviyam* 12000 is useful to know about the life of Siddha Agattiyar.

Bōgar: As per the *Agattiyar Soumiya Sāgaram*, the following works are said to be written by Bōgar. They are: *Bōgar* 12000, *Bōgar Sabtha Kāṇdam* 7000, *Bōgar Nighantu* 1700, *Bōgar Vaithiyam* 1000, *Bōgar Vaithiyam* 700, *Bōgar Sarakku Vaippu* 800, *Bōgar Janana Sāgaram* 550, *Bōgar Karpam* 360, *Bōgar Upadēśam* 150, *Bōgar Rana Vakatham* 100, *Bōgar Jñāna Sārāmsam* 100, *Bōgar Karpa Sūthiram* 54, *Bōgar*

⁷⁴ Tha. Kovendhan, *op.cit.*, *Passim*.

⁷⁵ Gānamanjari Sambathkumar, *Siva Mayam Kanda Siddhargal*, Sri Indhu Publications, Chennai, 2008.

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, p.20.

Vaithiya Sūthiram 77, *Bōgar Mūppu Sūthiram* 51, *Bōgar Jñāna Sūthiram* 37, *Bōgar Astānga Yōgam* 24 and *Bōgar Pūja Vithi* 20⁷⁷.

Kāgapusūṇḍar: *Pusūṇḍar Nādi*, a book on astrology, *Kāgapusūṇḍar Jñānam* 80, *Kāgapusūṇḍar Upaniṣad* 31, *Kāgapusūṇḍar Kāvīyam* 33, and a work on *Vēdānta* called *Kāgapusūṇḍar Kuṛaḷ* 16 are written by this Siddha⁷⁸.

Romariṣi: *Romariṣi Vaithiyam* 1000, *Romariṣi Sūthiram* 1000, *Amutha Kalai Jñānam* 50, *Romariṣi Pēru Nūl* 500, *Romariṣi Guru Nūl* 50, *Romariṣi Kāvīyam* 500, *Romariṣi Mūppu Sūthiram* 30, *Rōmariṣi Iraṇḍadi (Dōha)* 500, and *Romariṣi Sothida Vilakkam* are some of the works done by Siddha Romariṣi⁷⁹.

Kālaṅgi: in his *Jñāna Vindha Ragasyam* 30, Kālaṅgi explains about the Siddhar whom he met at Sadhuragiri, a popular abode of Siddhas near Srivilliputhur. Kālaṅgi *Vaithiya Kāvīyam* 1000, *Kālaṅgi Jñāna Sārāmsam* 500, *Kālaṅgi Vagārath tiraviyam* 200, *Kālaṅgi Jñānam* 180, *Kālaṅgi Karpa vithi* 84, *Kālaṅgi Jñāna Pūjāvithi* 80, *Kālaṅgi Taṇḍagam* 80, *Kālaṅgi Pagarani* 51, *Kālaṅgi Indira Jāla Jñānam* 46, *Kālaṅgi Dīkṣavithi* 35, *Kālaṅgi Updēsa Jñānam* 34, *Kālaṅgi Sūthiram* 33, *Kālaṅgi Jñāna Vindha Ragasyam* 30 and *Kālaṅgi Jñāna Sūthiram* 29 are said to be some important works of Siddha Kālaṅgi⁸⁰.

Koṅgaṇavar: *Koṅgaṇavar Vāda Kāvīyam* 3000, *Koṅgaṇavar Mukkāṇḍaṅgal* 1500, *Koṅgaṇavar Taṇṭikkuṇam* 200, *Koṅgaṇavar Vaithiyam* 200, *Koṅgaṇavar Vāda Sūthiram* 200, *Koṅgaṇavar Taṇḍagam* 120, *Koṅgaṇavar Jñāna Chaithanyam* 109, *Koṅgaṇavar Sarakku Vaippu* 111, *Koṅgaṇavar Karpa Sūthiram* 100, *Koṅgaṇavar Vālaikkummi* 100, *Koṅgaṇavar Jñāna Mukkāṇḍa Sūthiram* 80, *Koṅgaṇavar Jñāna Venba* 49, *Koṅgaṇavar Āthiyandha Sūthiram* 45, *Koṅgaṇavar Mūppu Sūthiram* 200, *Koṅgaṇavar Urpatthi Jñānam* 21 and *Koṅgaṇavar Suddha Jñānam* 16 are some of the important works of Koṅgaṇa Siddha⁸¹.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, p.39

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, p.46

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, p.49

⁸⁰ Gānamanjari Sambathkumar, *op.cit*, p.58.

⁸¹ *Ibid*. p.68

Sattaimuṇi: *Sattaimuṇi Nigaṇdu* 1200, *Sattaimuṇi Vāda Kāvīyam* 1000, *Sattaimuṇi Sarakku Vaippu* 500, *Sattaimuṇi Nava Ratṇa Vaippu* 500, *Sattaimuṇi Vākadam* 200, *Sattaimuṇi Muṇjñānam*, *Pinjñānam* 200, *Sattaimuṇi Karpam* 100, and *Sattaimuṇi Uṇmai Vilakkam* 51 are the few important works of Siddha Sattimuṇi⁸².

Yā Gōpu or Rāmadēvar: This siddha has two names and also his works are classified into two sections as the works Yā Gōpu and the works of Rāmadēvar. There found nearly 15 works under the former one such as *Yā Gōpu Savukkāram*, *Yā Gōpu Vaithiya Sinthāmaṇi*, *Yā Gōpu Kaṇṇa Kāṇḍam*, *Yā Gōpu Vaithiya Vāda Sūthiram*, *Yā Gōpu Suṇṇam*, *Yā Gōpu Senthūram*, *Yā Gōpu Vaithiyam*, *Yā Gōpu Kalaṅgam*, *Yā Gōpu Pañcāmitram*, *Yā Gōpu Kaṇṇa Sūthiram*, *Yā Gōpu Senthūra Sūthiram*, *Yā Gōpu Taṇḍagam*, *Yā Gōpu Vāda Sūthiram*, *Yā Gōpu Senthūra Sūthira Surukkam* and *Yā Gōpu Suṇṇa Sūthira Surukkam*⁸³.

It is said that when this Siddha was at Saduragiri hills, he wrote several works on *Vaithiya Śāstras* (medical treatises) in the name of Rāmadēvar, such as *Rāmadēvar Vaithiya Kāvīyam*, *Rāmadēvar Jālam*, *Rāmadēvar Nigaṇdu*, *Rāmadēvar Kalai Jñānam*, *Rāmadēvar Śivayōgam*, *Rāmadēvar Paribhāśai*, *Rāmadēvar Taṇḍagam*, *Rāmadēvar Patchaṇi*, *Rāmadēvar Parajñāna Kēsari*, *Rāmadēvar Vaithiya Sūthiram*, *Rāmadēvar Suddhi Muṇai*, *Rāmadēvar Aṣṭāṅga Yōgam*, *Mūppu Sūthiram* and *Rāmadēvar Paribhāśai Vilakkam*⁸⁴.

Gōrakkar (Gōrakṣa): Siddha Gōrakkar in Tamiḷ region wrote several works, but many of them are not available to us. Some of the missing works of Siddha Gōrakkar are *Gōrakkar Kālamēgam*, *Gōrakkar Kabāda Pūttu*, *Gōrakkar Kamalāñjani*, *Gōrakkar Brahma Bōdam*, *Gōrakkar Marali Vādam*, *Gōrakkar Muṇi Jaṇma Sitthu*, *Gōrakkar Muṇi Āṇma Sitthu*, *Gōrakkar Jñāna Jyothi*, *Gōrakkar Kalpa Bōdam* and *Gōrakkar Nilaiyodukkam*.

Some of the books written by Gōrakkar which are available now are *Gōrakkar Chandira Rēkai*, *Gōrakkar Nāma Nāsattiravukōl*, *Gōrakkar Rakṣamēkalai*, *Gōrakkar Muttāram*, *Gōrakkar Malai Vādakam*, *Gōrakkar Karpam*, *Gōrakkar Mukti Nēri*,

⁸² *Ibid.* p.74

⁸³ *Ibid.* p.80

⁸⁴ *Ibid.* p.83

*Gōrakkar Aṣṭakarmam, Gōrakkar Sūthiram, Gōrakkar Vasāra Sūthiram, Gōrakkar Mūligai and Gōrakkar Brahm̐a Jñānam*⁸⁵.

Macchamuṇi: *Macchamuṇi Kadaikkāṇdam 800, Macchamuṇi Kalai Jñānam 800, Macchamuṇi Nigaṇdu 400, Macchamuṇi Mūppu Dīkṣai 80, Macchamuṇi Tirāvakam 800, Macchamuṇi Vaithiyam 800, Macchamuṇi Pērunūl Kāvīyam 800, Macchamuṇi Sarakku Vaippu 800, Macchamuṇi Vākaram 800, Macchamuṇi Yōkam 800, Macchamuṇi Tirumandiram 800, Macchamuṇi Vēdāṇdam 800, Macchamuṇi Jñānam 800, Macchamuṇi Kuṟunūl 800, Macchamuṇi Dīkṣāvaḷi 100, Macchamuṇi Taṇdagam 100, Macchamuṇi Jñāna Dīkṣai 50, Macchamuṇi Sthūla Sūkkuma Kāraṇa Jñānam 30, and Macchamuṇi Sūthiram* are the few important works of Siddha Macchamuṇi⁸⁶.

Karuvūrār: Karuvūrār who also called as Mahā Siddha wrote the following works: *Karuvūrār Vaithiyam 500, Karuvūrār Vāda Kāvīyam 700, Karuvūrār Yōga Jñānam 500, Karuvūrār Palattittu 300, Karuvūrār Kuṟunūl Sūthiram 105, Karuvūrār Pūraṇa Jñānam 100, Karuvūrār Meichsurukkam 52, Karuvūrār Śiva Jñāna Bōdam 42, Karuvūrār Karpa Vithi 39, Karuvūrār Mūppu Sūthiram 32, Karuvūrār Aṣṭamāsittu (Mānṭharīkam), and Karuvūrār Pūjā Vithi 30*⁸⁷.

Pulipāṇi: Siddha Pulipāṇi was considered to be the chief disciple of Siddha Bōgar of Paḷaṇi hills. It is said that Siddha Pulipāṇi wrote several works and some of them are *Pulipāṇi Vaithiyam 500, Pulipāṇi Sōthidam 300, Pulipāṇi Jālam 325, Pulipāṇi Vaithiya Sūthiram 200, Pulipāṇi Pūjā Vithi 50, Pulipāṇi Śaṇmuga Pūjā 30, Pulipāṇi Simil Vitṭhai 25, Pulipāṇi Sūthira Jñānam 12, and Pulipāṇi Sūthiram 9*⁸⁸.

Tirumūlar: As already discussed, Tirumūlar is famous for his work *Tirumandiram*. However along with that, he also wrote several works in various fields. Some of his works are: *Tirumūlar Kāvīyam (Grantha) 8000, Tirumūlar Sirppanūl 1000, Tirumūlar Sōthidam 300, Tirumūlar Mānṭharīkam 600, Tirumūlar Salliyam 1000, Tirumūlar Vaithiya Kāvīyam 1000, Tirumūlar Vaithiya Karukkidaḷ 600, Tirumūlar Vaithiya Surukkam 200, Tirumūlar Sūkkuma Jñānam 100, Tirumūlar Pēruṅkāviyam 1500,*

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, pp.90-91.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*. p.94

⁸⁷ *Ibid*. pp.113-114

⁸⁸ Gānamanjari Sambathkumar, *op.cit*, p.168.

Tirumūlar Dīkṣa Vithi 100, *Tirumūlar Kōrvai Vithi* 16, *Tirumūlar Dīkṣa Vithi* 8, *Tirumūlar Dīkṣa Vithi* 18, *Tirumūlar Yōga Jñānam* 16, *Tirumūlar Vithi Nūl* 24, *Tirumūlar Ārādhāram* 64, *Tirumūlar Patcahi Nūl* 24, *Tirumandiram (Pērunūl)* 3000, *Tirumūlar Jñānam* 84, *Tirumūlar Jñāna upadēsam* 30, *Tirumūlar Naduvaṇai Jñānam* 16, *Tirumūlar Jñānakkuri* 30, *Tirumūlar Sōdasa Jñānam* 16, *Tirumūlar Jñānam*, *Tirumūlar Kuḷigai* 11, *Tirumūlar Pūja Vithi* 41, *Tirumūlar Vyāthik Kūru* 100, and *Tirumūlar Mūppu Sūthiram* 200⁸⁹.

Pulasthiyar: *Pulasthiyar Vaithiya Vātham*, *Pulasthiyar Vātha Sūthiram*, *Pulasthiyar Jñāna Sūthiram*, *Pulasthiyar Vaithiyam*, *Pulasthiyar Vaḷalai Surukkam*, and *Pulasthiyar Karpa Sūthiram* are few of the important works of Siddha Pulasthiyar⁹⁰.

Other Tāntric Works in Tamiḷ

The Vīra Śaiva cult which was propagated by Basava of the Kannada country during the middle of the 12th century was gradually spread into the Tamiḷ country after few centuries. From 16th century onwards, works on philosophical treatises, devotional poems, ethical books, *purānas*, and commentaries of this cult is available in Tamiḷ region. Rēvana Siddha was probably the first writer, who wrote *Aharādi Nighaṇtu*, a lexicographical work, and *Śivajñānadīpam*, a philosophical treatise. Most particularly, the *Śivajñānadīpam* is an excellent Śaiva Siddhānta work, in which the author devotes a few verses at the end of the treatise to explain the Vīra Śaiva concepts⁹¹.

Śivaprakāśa Swāmi's works entitled *Prabhuliṅga Līlai*, *Siddhānta Śikhāmaṇi* and *Advaita Veṇba* are all important philosophical works of Vīra Śaiva sect, which belong to the 17th century. Śivaprakāśa's *Naṇṇēri* is probably the only book on ethics written by a Vīra Śaiva. It is a short poem of good maxims in easy language, studied even today by school children. *Basava purāna* by an unknown author is a very

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.187-188.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.214.

⁹¹ M. Arunachalam, *op.cit*, p. 222

ambitious large work of a later period, on Basava and other top figures in the Vīra Śaiva hagiology, but has poor poetic merit⁹².

One of the important contributions of Śaivism to literature is its later devotional poetry. Long after the Śaiva canon was compiled, devotional literature has been growing and we find later day poets offering large volumes of their songs as devotional tributes at the feet of not only Śiva, but Śakti, Muruga and Viṇāyaka. There are innumerable such poems, both merely as devotional offerings, and also as literary *prabandha* pieces. Eminent writers in this field are Kumargurupara Swāmi and Śivaprakāsa Swāmi⁹³.

One aspect of the development of Śaiva literature is the writing of poems on Śakti. Poems on Muruga are found in *Paṭṭupāttu* and in the 9th Book (*Tirumuṟai*) of the Śaiva canon and poems on Viṇāyaka in the 11th Book (*Tirumuṟai*). Songs in praise of Śakti are no doubt found in *Silapadhikāram* but separate poems are not found in early literature. *Kavirāja Paṇḍita* (16th century) has translated *Soundaryalahari* of Śaṅkara into Tamiḷ verse and though it does not rank high as poetry, it was the precursor of many more writings in praise of Śakti. *Sarasvati antādi* (12th century) and *Sakala Kalāvaḷḷi Mālai* (17th century) are in praise of Sarasvati. Varaguṇarāma Kulasēkara Pāndiya's *Ambikai Mālai* (16th century) and Kumara Gurupara's *Mīnākṣi Ammai Piḷḷai Tamiḷ* are well known works in praise of Śakti; but *Abhirāmi Antādi*⁹⁴ (18th century) was instantly popular and remains so even today⁹⁵.

Paṭṭiṇattār pādal and *Tāyumāṇavar pādal* are anthologies of verses which were available to the compilers of the respective authors. *Paṭṭiṇattār*'s works such as *Kōyil Nānmaṇimālai*, *Tirukkaḷumala Mummaṇikkōvai*, *Tiruvidaïmaruthūr Mummaṇikkōvai*, *Tiruvēgambamudaiyār Tiruvanthāti* and *Tiruvoṟṟiūr Oruba Orupathu* are some of his works which are included in the 11th Book (*Tirumuṟai*) of

⁹² M. Arunachalam, *Op.cit*, p. 223; he also authored the work *Nālvar Nānmaṇi Mālai*, about the four principal Śaiva saints. See Thamizhannal, *op.cit*, p. 303

⁹³ M. Arunachalam, *op.cit*, p. 209

⁹⁴ These kinds of songs on goddess Śakti have inspired the national poet Bhārati to sing his Śakti songs.

⁹⁵ M. Arunachalam, *op.cit*, pp. 210-211

the Śaiva Canon⁹⁶. *Tāyumāṇavar*'s work '*Parāparakkannī*' consist of rare philosophies in the simplest forms⁹⁷. The latter half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century witnessed the collection of many anthologies, and one among them is a selection of 1000 verses from Rāmaliṅga Swāmi for use in prayers⁹⁸. Rāmaliṅga wrote in simple direct language coming from his heart. His most celebrated work '*Tiru-Aruṭpā*', consists of 5818 poems which are now divided into six chapters (*Tirumuṟai*)⁹⁹. Thus, Tāyumāṇavar and Rāmaliṅga Swāmi complete the picture of later Śaiva literature¹⁰⁰.

There is yet another sector of poetic writing in Tamil which are mostly related to philosophy, religion, architecture, astrology (for e.g. *Siddhar-ārūdam*), alchemy, medicine, chemistry, black magic, etc. However, these works are not generally considered in any account of Tamil literature. Some of these works had been in existence from the 10th century onwards. The writers often assume such names as Agastiya, Bōgar, Danvaṇtri and Tirumūlar¹⁰¹.

Koṅgumaṇḍala Satakam

The *Satakam* is a type of poem which contains more than 100 verses each, generally in the very long *viruttam* metre, with a reference to some local deity in the second half of the last line, and containing in the other lines observations of life and living. They have had immense popularity till the first quarter of the 20th century. These works helped to keep alive many social traditions and conventions in the minds of successive generations, because a memorization of at least half a dozen *satakams*

⁹⁶ There exists some controversy regarding the number and period of Paṭṭiṇaṭṭār. The one who authored above works are said to be lived in the 11th century and he belongs to the Trader Community. His real name was Tiruveṅkādar and his works are included in the 11th Book of the Śaiva canon. The other one is a Siddha whose name is Paṭṭiṇaṭṭu Piḷḷai and his songs are included into collection of Siddhar Pātalkaḷ, see Thamizhannal, *op.cit*, pp. 302-303

⁹⁷ Thamizhannal, *op.cit*, p. 304

⁹⁸ M. Arunachalam, *op.cit*, p. 257

⁹⁹ His other works are *Maṇu Muṟai Kaṇḍa Vāsagam*, a work based on the life history of Maṇu Nīthi Cōḷaṇ; and *Jīva Kāruṇya Oḷukkam*, a work advocating the non-killing of animals and vegetarianism.

¹⁰⁰ M. Arunachalam, *op.cit*, p. 209

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.* pp. 273-74

was considered necessary for a beginner in literature¹⁰². One among the famous *satakam* is the *Koṅgumaṇḍala Satakam* which belongs to the 18th century C.E.

The *Koṅgumaṇḍala Satakam*¹⁰³ gives us many references about the Tamil Siddhas like Bōgar, Pulippāni, Koṅgaṇar, Itaikkādar, etc. It says that both Bōgar and Pulippāni are two great adepts in *yōga*, medicine and alchemy from Vaikāvūr¹⁰⁴. Regarding Koṅgaṇar, it describes him as ‘one capable of transmuting base metals into gold’¹⁰⁵. Similarly one of the songs of *Koṅgumaṇḍala Satakam* says that the Siddhar Itaikkādar is hailed from Koṇṇavanūr in the Koṅgu country¹⁰⁶. Further it also gives reference to Karūr Siddha¹⁰⁷. A difficulty found in this work is that it clubs Karuvūr Siddhar with Karuvūr Dēvar of 10th century, and generally says that Karuvūrār, the great Siddha born in Karuvūr in the Koṅgumaṇḍalam, (i) and depicts him as accomplishing the *aṣṭabandha* of a huge *liṅga*, by merely spitting his saliva or *Tāmbula* (by chewing betel leaves and arecanut)¹⁰⁸; (ii) who made a tree shower fish and (iii) wrote the *Tiruvīsaippā*. However, this work does not give any further detail regarding the places and circumstances under which these events took place. But very soon, these references were developed into elaborate legends by the anonymous author of the *Karuvūr Purāṇam*¹⁰⁹.

Sthalapurāṇas

Sthalapurāṇas are innumerable. There is a *purāṇa* for every little shrine in the Tamiḷnādu. It glorifies the shrine; the deity installed there, the temple tank and the temple tree. In fact, it is glorified with local legend and written with a religious bias. It may also be considered as a collection of local folk tales. Such books were first written in the 16th century and they continue to be written to the present day¹¹⁰. There

¹⁰² *Ibid.* p. 180

¹⁰³ For this study, *Koṅgumaṇḍala Satakam*, written by Vijayamaṅgalam Kārmēgakkavi and compiled by T. A. Muthusamy Konar, Sadhu Press, Chennai, 1928, is followed.

¹⁰⁴ *Koṅgumaṇḍala Satakam*, No. 36, Vaikāvūr is another name of Paḷaṇi.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, No. 37, It is a work on Koṅgaṇa Siddha by Kārmēgakkavi, a Jaina author of 18th century.

¹⁰⁶ *Koṅgumaṇḍala Satakam*, No. 38.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.* No. 34.

¹⁰⁸ This story is further elaborated in the *Karuvūr Purāṇam*, verse Nos. 62-71.

¹⁰⁹ See R. Venkatraman, *op.cit*, p.56.

¹¹⁰ M. Arunachalam, *op.cit*, pp. 234-35.

exists several *Sthalapurāṇa* which carries information about the Siddhas of Tamiḷnāḍu, where they lived or connected with the local temples. One among them is the *Paḷaṇittalapurāṇam* of Bālasubramania Kavirāyar (17th century), which gives us stray references to Gōrakkar's visit to Paḷaṇi and his miracles. It further says that he transformed himself into a fish and entered into a nearby pond, which consequently acquired the names *Matśya (macca) tīrtha* and *Siddha tīrtha*. The term *Macca tīrtha* is still in vogue at Paḷaṇi¹¹¹.

From the above literary survey, it is clear that some of the existing *Tantras* are philosophical. Among such works, those belonging to Kaśmiri Śaivism are very important. Some works deal with various aspects of *Tantra*, such as *Dīkṣā*, *Guru*, *Śiṣya*, *Pañcatattva*, *Maṇḍala*, *Mudrā*, *Yantra*, six *Cakras*, *Puraścaraṇa*, etc. Many works have, as their themes, the six *Tāntric* acts of *Māraṇa* (killing), *Vidvesana* (hating), *Stambhana* (paralyzing), *Vaśīkaraṇa* (controlling others), *Uccātana* (expulsion) and *Śāntikarma* (pacificatory rite). Kāli and her worship engage the attention of some writers. Forms of the goddess like Chinṇamastā, Bhuvaneśvari, Tripurā, etc. are the subjects of some works. *Kaula* rites and different *ācāras* like *Vāmācārā*, *Vīrācārā*, etc. have been dealt with in certain works. *Pīthasthānas* like Kāmākhyā have been described in some works. Different kinds of *Sāadhanā*, particularly *Śava-sāadhanā* (meditation on a corpse), magical processes for the acquisition of different kinds of *Siddhi*, e.g. *aṣṭasiddhi*; *yōga* and its accessories have been taken up in certain works. *Kuṇḍalini-yōga* figures very prominently. Rosaries for *japa*, *kumāri-pūjā*, *pūjā* in general, both external and mental (*mānasa*) *pūjā* or *antaryāga*, are some of the important topics which are generally discussed in the above *Tāntric* works.

Tāntric works in Indian languages other than Sanskrit are numerous and diverse. In South Indian languages, *Tāntric* Śaiva and Śakta literature is abundant, concerning, for instance, the cult of Kāli or the Siddhas or the ritual and devotional themes. There are also many poems, songs, and devotional or philosophical works written in other languages, and they still continue to appear today. Texts in Sanskrit form not only the majority of *Tāntric* literature, but also its essential part, for

¹¹¹ R. Venkatraman, *Op.cit*, p.53.

whatever role so-called popular elements may have played in its evolution; *Tantrism* belongs fundamentally to the learned Sanskrit tradition of India. Even at its popular level, Hinduism always remains closely knitted to this tradition. That is why even *Tāntric* works in vernacular languages have close links with Sanskrit literature, which provided them with their themes, terminology, and conceptual framework¹¹².

Thus, the similarity between these non-Tamiḷ works of the Siddhas of North India and the Tamiḷ Siddha works like the *Kuṇḍalini Yōga*, and other practices, mode of worship, their philosophies and so on are commonly found in all of the above Siddha schools of philosophy. These enable us to view the latter school in a pan-Indian perspective.

¹¹² Mircea Eliade, *op.cit*, vol. 6. p.366.

Chapter III

INSCRIPTIONS AND SCULPTURAL EVIDENCES OF NĀTHA-SIDDHA CULT IN SOUTH INDIA

As discussed in the previous chapters the period between 6th and 15th century C.E and after, witnessed a voluminous literary production in various Indian languages popularised the sectarian faiths of Pāśupatas, Śāktas, Kāpālikas and Kālamukhas, Bāuls, Mattamayūras, Gāṇapatyas and Nātha Siddhas of *tāntric* tradition. By the end of the 14th century, the process of assimilation and absorption between these diverse sectarian faiths was complete from which it emerged as a pan-Indian tradition/cult of the Nātha-Siddhas leading to the elevation of this cult of the popular genre to the level of elite religion. The Nātha-Siddha philosophy and cult received royal patronage in East and Central India, whereas in other parts of the country, it remained a cult of the masses. As a consequence in South India, we do not come across as many references to royal patronage to the Nava-Nātha/siddha cult.

Surprisingly, beginning from the early 14th century, coinciding with the emergence of Vijayanagara Empire, South India witnessed the deliberate patronisation of the cult of Nava-nāthas in the sculptural art of temples in every nook and corner of the empire. The Vijayanagara sculptors found an ingenious way of showing those human forms with characteristic appendages such as head dress, ear rings, necklaces, waist bands and other *yōgic* ritual items such as *yōga-paṭṭa*, *yōga-daṇḍa*, *Kamaṇḍala* etc. More importantly to differentiate and identify the *divine* Nava-nāthas from the simple nātha practitioners/devotees/followers, instead of engraving their names, they are shown with vehicles of animals indirectly indicating their personal names. Although '*described as mere decorative additions*'¹, the occurrence of these low relief engravings of Nātha Siddhas in association with or in proximity to the representations yogic exercises, postures, erotic and sexual representations and other *tāntric* rituals, hint at the close relationship between them. Moreover, the textual descriptions of the Nātha-siddhas along with their ritualistic items, preserved in the literary compositions and oral tradition from across the country, are represented in great detail in the sculptural representations. Infact, these

¹ Anna. L. Dallapicola and Anila Verghese, *Sculpture at Vijayanagar: Iconography and Style*, Manohar, New Delhi, 1998, p.79

textual and oral traditions help us in the identification of the Nātha Siddha representations and to differentiate between the representations of the Nātha practitioners, Siddhas and their yogic practices. The number of such low relief engravings in the temple art of the Vijayanagara and post-Vijayanagara periods, of both Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava affiliations, is so numerous that it is difficult to attempt a quantitative analysis. Since our survey of Nātha iconography is only partial covering temples explore randomly in various parts of South India quantification of the data will not yield any logical conclusions.

In this chapter, the inscriptional evidences indicating the patronisation of the Nātha-Siddha Cult and their sculptural representations are described and analysed. Since these Navanātha sculptures are shown with the animal vehicles, their names were identified and corroborated on the basis of textual references from across the subcontinent.

Epigraphical Sources of the Nātha Siddha cult

Inscriptions provide us the most authentic information about chronological position of the rulers; the social, cultural, economic and religious conditions. Therefore they are considered as the genuine records of history. Based on the information inscribed in these inscriptions are mostly datable to ancient and medieval period. Majority of these inscriptions record gifts to some social and religious institutions like temples, monasteries, village assemblies, individuals and so on. However, to study the history of Siddha cult of India in general and of South India in particular, the inscriptional sources are not many. In this study all the reliable inscriptions issued by various rulers and published in the volumes of like *Annual Report on Epigraphy (ARE)*, *South Indian Inscriptions (SII)*, *Epigraphia Carnatica (EC)*, *Epigraphia Indica (EI)* and other secondary sources which provide analytical discussion of such inscriptions, that deals with the Siddha Cult in South India are discussed. On the basis of available epigraphical sources an attempt is made to study the chronology of the Nātha Siddha Cult in south India.

Sōladēvanahalli Inscription, Karnātaka

Nātha cult was very popular in Karnātaka, which was believed to be a blend of Vajrāyāna Buddhism and Śaivism. Though there are no exclusive followers of the cult in Karnātaka, the centers of their activity are there even now. Gōrakṣanāth and Matśyēndranāth themselves are believed to have popularised the cult in Karnātaka. Nātha *mathas* are found in many parts of Karnātaka beginning from Handi Badganāth in Belgaum district to Kadire and Viṭṭal in Dakṣiṇa Kaṇṇada. Bhois of Gulbarga area are among the followers in Nātha Pantha². This cult is also centered in the surrounding suburbs of Bangalore which is revealed by the sculptures found in the Ulsūr Somēśvara temple, Kalāsipālayam Jalakantēśvara temple, Yōganandīsvara temple, Śiva temple of Āvani and other important temples of Karnātaka. The promulgation of Nāthism in Tulu-nādu and in Karnātaka which was under the influence of the Cōlas is seen from the Sōladēvanahalli inscription³ in Kaṇṇada characters of Rājēndra Cōla-I dated 1029 C.E.⁴, which speaks about offering perpetual light to the God of Kukkānūr-nād in the Vikramacōla-maṇḍala. This inscription found with two parts and each of them ends with an imprecation. The first part gives the following account of Nāthapanth.

“Yuddhamalla-Dēva’s dandanāyaka, of the Bhāradvāja gōtra, Appanayya’s son Vāmanayya, when his guru Mauni-bhaṭṭāraka obtained siddhi (or final emancipation), on his departure (or death), had Siddhēśvara made. Chhāyā paramēśvara’s son was named Stambhanātha. His son, versed in the meaning of the Kaḷāgama, was the yati Dvīpanātha. His disciple was born Mauninātha-munipa. The bearer of the commands of his sandals, the learned Rūpaśiva, devoted to the Sivāgama, shines in the world. For the temple of Siddhēśvara, Rūpaśiva-paṇḍita is the master”.

Then the second part of the same inscription gives a detailed description of Nāthapantha in Chandrapuri as follows:

² Suryanath U. Kamath (ed.) *Gazetteer of India, Karnataka State Gazetteer, Part I*, Bangalore, Government of Karanataka, 1982, pp.427-428.

³ It is a pillar inscription. Now the pillar is at the Victoria Jubilee Institute, Mysore.

⁴ G. Kuppuram, *Imperial Cholas in Karnataka: A Critical Study*, Sundeep Prakashan, New Delhi, 1986, p. 139

“At the foot of the sacred big tree (*Śrī Vṛksha*) in Chandrapuri⁵ situated by the western ocean was stationed Ādinātha, by only thinking solely on whose lotus feet are destroyed the results of the (evil) deeds committed in former births. His disciple, waited on by kings, among the circle of great ones the greatest, was Chchhāyādhinātha, whose head the keenest rays (*chhāyā*) of the sun (*dinanātha*) do not affect. An intoxicated bee at his lotus feet, called Stambha, was Dhaḷādhinātha. Awakened by the dust from his lotus feet, was Dvīpanātha the world-renowned. His disciple, invincible by other disputants, was Mauninātha, in the form of Rudrā. Like a bee at his lotus feet, the best of the twice-born, was Vāmana, chief of ministers. At the time of his guru’s decease, he caused to be made of stone, in the name of his guru, the Siddhēśvara temple, complete with enclosure, etcetera. And to the god Siddhēśvara 12 kaṇḍugas of land in Bāṇapura were granted with faith by the daṇḍanāyaka Vāmana.” This second part also ends with some imprecatory verses, with a following statement “In this land the Siddhēśvara āchāri is master of 2 kaṇḍugas”⁶.

This evidence testifies to the fact that the Nāthapantha was strong in Chandravara during the 11th century and the record helps us to know that Ādinātha, who was popular in the Tuḷuva country during the 9th-10th centuries was the first of the five nāthas (*ādi-pañcakam*)⁷. This inscription also testifies the arrival of the Nātha Siddha cult and its popularity in this part of peninsular India as early as 9th Century C.E.

Jagalūr Tāluk Inscription (1279 C.E)

One inscription from Jagalūr *Tāluk* of Karnāṭaka records the donation of a village by a general of the Yādava King Rāmachandra to a “Yōgi World conqueror” (*yōgi cakravarti*) named Prasāda Dēva. In this inscription we find what appears to be an enumeration of Prasāda Dēva’s lineage: “Ādigadedunātha Caturaraginātha (Chaurāginātha?) Gōrakhnātha Vistāradevī...nātha Kāhalinavi (Kanthadī?), Śurppāṇanātha, Lonanātha, Naranātha, pantha”⁸.

⁵ The village Chandrapuri is now the modern Chandravara village of the Honnavar taluk of North Kanara district.

⁶ *EC*, Vol. IX, Nelamangalam Taluq, No. 1. (*EC.IX, NL.I*); Also see David Gordon White, *The Alchemical Body*, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 2004, pp. 95-96

⁷ G. Kuppuram, *op.cit*, p.139.

⁸ David Gordon White, *Op.cit*, p.94

Sōmnāth Inscription (1287 C.E)

An inscription (*Chintra Prasasti*) of the reign of Sāraṅgadhāra of the Chāḷukya dynasty of Gujarat, dated 1287 C.E., found in a long stone slab belongs to a temple at Sōmanātha or Dēvapattāṇa in Sorath (Kathiawad) is a lengthy one containing 66 lines. This inscription speaks about the consecration of temples and the installation of five *liṅgas* at this place. It also records the installation of five statues viz., Gōrakṣa (Gōrakhnāth), Bhairava, Āñjanēya (Hanuman), Sarasvathi, and *Siddhi* Viñāyaka (Gaṇēśa) in the *antarālas* of the five temples⁹. This inscription also mentions the Kālamukha teacher Valmīkarāśi.

Though the popular names of the Navanāthas were not found in these inscriptions, these are the earliest evidences which directly mention the names of the Nāthas, who lived in Kārṇāṭaka region. However, there is a chance of getting more evidences like this, through an extensive study on epigraphy of Kāṇṇada region.

Inscriptions of Tirunelvēli district, Tamiḷnāḍu

In Tamiḷnāḍu, so far no inscriptions are found speaking about the Siddha cult, though this cult is extended over the length and breadth of the region. According to R.Venkataraman¹⁰, ‘*the epigraphs of Tamiḷnāḍu are singularly deficient with regard to the history of the Siddhas*’. However, mention must be made of a copper plate said to have been granted by one Rāmappayyan, the general of Tirumalai Nāyak (1623-59 C.E.) who ruled from Madurai, to one Pulippāṇi¹¹, who was considered as the disciple of Bōgar (c. 17th-18th century) a famous Siddha of Paḷaṇi hills. But, this is useless for the study of Siddha cult and it also seems to be a forgery. A pair of Tamiḷ inscriptions dated 1253 C.E., found in the Nellaiyappar temple of Tirunelvēli belongs to the 15th regnal year the Sundarapāṇḍiya¹² speaks about the donation of lands to a tradition of *Tapasis* (ascetics)¹³. Though these two inscriptions are not directly referring to the

⁹ The stone inscription is now preserved in the Quinta of Don João de Castro at Cintra. For more details see “the Cintra Prasasti of the Reign of Sāraṅgadeva”, in *EI.*, Vol. I, pp.271-312

¹⁰ R. Venkataraman, *A History of the Tamil Siddha Cult*, Ennes Publications, Madurai, 1990, pp.12-13

¹¹ Later the line of hereditary successors of Pulippāṇi assumed this name as a title.

¹² *SII Vol. V, No.420, 421*; see also *ARE, No. 131 & 132 of 1894*.

¹³ It is notable that the term *Tapasi* generally denotes the *sādhaka* who is an ascetic. For instance, “The *Mataṅga pāramēśvarāgama* says that the *amayin* should serve his teacher in order to eventually be granted liberation, the *putraka* should be detached with evenness of behavior, and serve his teacher, his

Siddha cult in those regions, the contents of them indicate the existence Siddha cult during that period. The content of the inscription is as follows:

“Of the Tapasis, who were seen by Machunanar Vikaramachōladēva to recite the Tirugnānam in front of the Tirunelveli temple such as: Tavapērumān, one of disciples who came in the tradition of Viśhakanda Dēvar; Anābāyan, one of disciples who came in the tradition of Mahādēvar of Vīrasanthānam; Tirunaṭṭa pērumān, one of disciples who came in the tradition of Śivapātha-haradayar of Tiruvārūr north mutt; Niraiyangai Āduvān, one of disciples who came in the tradition of Paśupathi Dēvar, who was the protector of Biksha mutt; Dēvagāl Dēvan, one of disciples who came in the tradition of Sundara Dēvar, of Tiruvarur north mutt; Tirugnāna Sambhandan, one of disciples who came in the tradition of protector of the Tirunagīsvara Bikśa mutt, Kalikadinthagaiyan, one of disciples who came in the tradition of Pasupathi Dēvar, the protector of Bikśa mutt; Tirunelveli Udayan, one of disciples who came in the tradition of Nilakanta Śiva, of Madurai South mutt; and to Tirunelveli Udayān, one of the disciples of Uyyakonda Dēvar, who came in the tradition of Alakiya Nāyaka, of Tirunelveli Māligai mutt; Śivamukthi kāṭṭinan, one of disciples who came in the tradition of Pasupathi Dēvar, who was the protector of Bikśa mutt; Aram Uraitha Pērumān, disciple of Anukka Vanthonḍar, of Eastern mutt tradition of Tirunelveli south mutt; and to the persons who were all came in their traditions... eleven plots were donated to establish their mutt (in some specified boundaries)”.

Another inscription¹⁴ of the same period found in the same temple seems to be a copy of the above inscription, but with some modifications in the amount of donated lands. The indirect details of *guru paramparā* i.e., lineage of teachers, the term *Pañcāchāries* who recite the *pañcaatcharā mantra* for worshipping lord Śiva, viz. *na-ma-si-vā-ya*, *Bhikśa* mutt are all comparatively related to the Siddha Cult in one or other aspects. So far in whole Tamilnādu region this is the only inscription indirectly mentioning about some of the aspects of Siddha Cult in this part of the country.

Siddharmalai Inscription, Tamilnādu

Siddharmalai is a hill located near Mēṭṭupattī and Pēraṇai Dam in the Nilakkotṭai Taluk of the Madurai District. There is a Śiva temple on the top of the

god, and the sacred fire, while the *sādhaka* is an ascetic (*tapasvin*) whose consciousness is one-pointed in his repetition of *mantra* to attain his goal”. (Gavin Flood, (Ed.), *Hinduism*, Blackwell Publishing Ltd., USA, 2003, pp.220-221).

¹⁴ *SII*, Vol. V, No. 421; see also *ARE*, No. 132 of 1894. These inscriptions are found on the outside of the east wall of the third *prakāra* of the Nelliayappar temple, at Tirunelvely, a southern district of Tamilnādu.

Hill, in which a Tamil inscription dated c. 1410 C.E, on the walls of the temple mentions the hill as Siddharmalai¹⁵. In the shrine containing the Sandals, is an inscription which refers to them as the Sandals of Sahajānandanātha, (c.14th century)¹⁶, who was a pupil of the ascetic Sachidānandanātha and the author of the Manōramā, a commentary on the Āṇandalahari¹⁷.

Śrisailam Inscriptions, Āndhra Pradesh

The *Siddha* cult is the most important one at Śrisailam, which in all likelihood might have coterminous to the Pāśupata School. The epithet ‘*Siddha Kṣētra*’ given to Śrisailam was due to the popularity of this cult in Śrisailam. Many village names contain the prefix ‘*Siddha*’ such as *Siddhavatam*, *Siddhapuram*¹⁸, *Siddhasamudram*¹⁹, *Siddhēśwaram*, *Siddhula gavi* and so on, which are mentioned in the inscriptions of Śrisailam. Towards the end of the 15th century, the assimilation of various *tāntric* schools culminates in the patronization of poets by the Saivaite Mathas, and one such poet, Gourana who is credited with the introduction of *Nava Nātha charitra* to the Telugu people wrote it in *dvipada* style at the instance of the chief pontiff *Sāntarāya* of Śrisaila Bhikṣa Vritti *Matha*, and dedicates the same to him. Gourana accepts that his work was a copy of the same title written by one of his predecessor named Śrigiri *ayyagāru*. But Śrigiri’s work is not presently available²⁰, but helps us to indicate the popularity of the Navanāthas in the Telugu speaking areas as early as 14th Century.

There are a few inscriptions found at Śrisailam which are purely related to the Siddha cult in that region. Foremost among them, a small label inscription in early 6th century characters was noticed on the rocky floor on the way to the Saraṅgadhāra *matha*. It reads “*Sarasa Paramātmā*”. The word *Paramātmā* means a man possessing divine or yōgic powers. The prefixing word ‘*sarasa*’ suggests his field of excellence; that is the art of *Rasa vidyā* (alchemy). This small label epigraph therefore can reasonably be ascribed to certain Siddha of considerable prominence in those days.

¹⁵ ARE No.44, of 1908

¹⁶ ARE No.47, of 1908; also Rep. Part II, p. 91, para 99

¹⁷ T.V. Mahalingam, *Early South Indian Paleography*, University of Madras, 1974, p. 258

¹⁸ ARE No.12, of 1915

¹⁹ ARE No.34, of 1915

²⁰ P.V.P. Parabrahma Sastry, *Srisailam: Its History and Cult*, Srisaila Devasthanam Publication, Srisailam, 4th Ed., 2007, p.39.

The above mentioned label inscription “*Sarasa Paramātmā*” is also noticeable at Ālampūr temple complex²¹.

Another inscription found at Śrisailam temple belonging to 1512 C.E., describes about the *Siddhis* of Siddhas, and also refers to Siddha Bhikṣa Vritti²², the presiding Śaiva Pontiff of Śrisaila and his devotee²³. In another inscription (1585 C.E), we find reference to Nandinātha and Bhrīṅginātha, and *mathas* functioning in their names²⁴. Besides, there are names of the persons, names of the *mathas*, and villages with the prefixed with ‘*Siddha*’ found in the inscriptions of Śrisailam as well as in the temples of its surrounding regions, which are helpful to study the Siddha cult of South India in general and Āndhra Pradesh or Śrisailam in particular.

Inscribed Nātha Sculptures of Kadapa, Āndhra Pradesh

In a small village in Kadapa district of Āndhra Pradesh, an inscription²⁵ speaks about the donation of land by one *Siddhayya* after worshipping *Sarva Siddhas*. The sculptural representations of individual *Nāthas* appears to be popular in the Āndhra region as evident from the presence of four sculptures of Mañjula *Nātha*, Mēgha *Nātha*, Sāraṅgadhāra and Gōrakṣa. It is likely that the sculptures of the remaining five *Nāthas* which have been installed there, but were subsequently lost. These sculptures however are not shown with vehicles, but individual names were engraved on the lower portions of the stone platforms. These sculptures seem to be much earlier than the Vijayanagara examples²⁶. Interestingly an inscription dated C.E. 1245 of Nellore District of Āndhra Pradesh also speaks about ‘*Rasa, Rasāyana, Patañjāna, Khadga, yāga, Mantravada, Dhumravada, Garudavada*’ sects all of which popular in the region

²¹ *Ibid*, pp. 30-31

²² Even earlier to this inscription, the literary sources like *Nava Nātha Charitra* written by Gourana in Telugu indicate the popularity of this cult. Gourana belongs to the early half of the 15th century.

²³ P.V. Parabrahma Sastry, *op.cit.*, p. 97

²⁴ Inscription No.27, P.V. Parabrahma Sastry, *op.cit.*, p.115

²⁵ A. Butterworth and V.Venugopal Chetty (eds.), *A Collection of the Inscriptions on Copper plates and stones in the Nellore District*, 1990 (rep.), p.1330

²⁶ A. Umamaheswara Sastri, *Kadapa Jilla Sasanalu: Samskriti Charitra*, (Inscriptions of Kadapa District: Culture and History) in Telugu, Sahiti Samrajyamu, Proddatur, 1995, p.136

where a temple of Siddha Nātha Dēva is existing'²⁷. This indicates the great antiquity of the Siddha/Nātha cult in these parts of the Āndhra region.

Inscriptions of Puduchērry

The inscriptions found in Puduchērry region also give some information about the existence of the Siddha cult in Puduchērry region during the medieval period. Few of the inscriptions found in the Varadarāja Perumal temple of Tirubuvaṇai in Puduchērry, contain terms like 'Māhēśvara'. T.N. Gaṇapathy states that 'in Indian tradition Siddhas are generally classified into Nātha Siddhas, Rasa Siddhas, Māhēśvara Siddhas and Saṅgata Siddhas. Further he also says that the Siddhas from the south are known as Māhēśvara Siddhas, who advocates the pure method, the 'Suddha Mārga' of *tantra*²⁸. In that way, two inscriptions of Tirubuvaṇai temple refers to the word 'Māhēśvara', and donations made to feed them.

During the reign of Kuloṭṭuṅga Cōḷa I (C.E. 1113), 10 *mā* of land adjoined to the *matha* (Tirunāvukarasar *matha*) was donated by the village assembly of Tirubuvaṇai Mādēvi Chaturvēdi Maṅgalam, for the purpose of feeding the Māhēśvarars, who visits the Śiva temples of Tirubuvaṇai Mādēvi Chaturvēdi Maṅgalam. The inscription refers the incident as 'Śri Māhēśvarar amudhu cēiyya maṭappuramāga Iṟaippāth iṟāka viṭṭa nilam'²⁹.

Similarly, another inscription of the same temple mentions that, one Cōḷa Siṅga Rāyan alias Prithiṅgaraiyan, donated 2 *mā* of wet land and ½ *mā* of dry land at Rāja Nārāyaṇa Viḷākam, located in the above village, to the Tirunāvukarasar *matha*, for the purpose of providing food and accommodation to the Śivayōgis and Māhēśvarars who came and stayed there. The inscription refers the incident as, 'vaḷṭi vara varum Śivasōgikaḷum, Śri Māhēśvararum amudhu cēiyya kadavathaka'³⁰.

²⁷ N. Chandramouli, 'Siddha Cult In South India: Representations In Art And Their Ramifications', (Paper presented in the International Seminar on 'World Religions after September 11th: An Asian Perspective' Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, 17-19, January, 2009)

²⁸ T.N. Ganapathy, *The Philosophy of the Tamil Siddhas*, ICPR, New Delhi, 2004 (2nd edn.), pp.21-22

²⁹ ARE: No. 200 of 1919; see also G. Vijayavenugopal (ed.), *Inscriptions of Puducherry*, Vol. I, (Tirubuvanai Inscription No. 132), French Institute of Indology, Pondicherry, 2006, pp. 184.

³⁰ ARE: No. 203 of 1919; see also G. Vijayavenugopal (ed.), *Op.cit.*, pp. 190.

But according the *Tirumandiram*, the act of feeding devotees of Śiva is also known as *Māheśvara pūjā*. It is deemed higher than *dēvayajna* or *śrāddha* (a religious ceremony observed for the benefit of dead relatives). To some extent it is better than making donations to temples and Brahmans, and constructing temples. The *Tirumandiram* claims that feeding the devotees of Śiva and partaking of left-overs of their meals would result in liberation and elimination of sins. A separate chapter with ten verses entitled ‘*Māhēśvara pūjā*’ in *Tirumandiram*³¹ constitutes an appeal to the indigenous population to abandon Brahmanical religious practices and it advised to support the activities of vernacular *matha*.

*akaram āyiram antaṇarkku īyil eṇ
cikaram āyiram ceytu muṭikkil eṇ
pakaru ṇāṇi pakal ūṇ palaṭṭukku
nikarilai eṇpatu niccayam tāṇē*³².

(“Of what use it to gift Brahmans abodes in thousands// Of what use is to erect towering temples in thousands//It is beyond doubt these acts to not equal// The merits of feeding a jñāni at noon³³)

Thus, the inscriptions of Tirubuvaṇai are almost related to both the terms as used by T.N. Gaṇapathy and Tirumūlar in his *Tirumandiram*. These inscriptions testify the existence of the Siddha cult in this region during the medieval period.

Apart from the temple inscriptions, some of mathas in Villianūr region of Puduchērry also contain a couple of inscriptions which are related to the existence of the Siddha cult in this region. Three inscriptions are identified, of which two are found in the Villianūr Kalvi matha and one in the *Samādhi* of Rāma Paradēsi at Villianūr. They belong to 18th Century.

Inscription in the Kalvi Mutt – Samādhi Shrine at Villianūr-I

1. Śivamayam
2. Vilvanallūr Mēyṇṇāna Māmuni Dēsikaravargal
3. Guru muhūrtham sathā sēvai
4. Rāyavēlūr Thuluva Vēllāla marabhu
5. Vēṇkitasāmi Mudaliāravargal Kaṭṭalai

³¹ *Tirumandiram*, Verses. 1821-1830; The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society, Tinnevely Ltd., 2007 (rep.), pp. 717-721

³² *Tirumandiram*, Verse. 1824

³³ Maithili Thayanithy, *The Concept of Living Liberation in the Tirumandiram*, Ph.D. Thesis, Centre for the Study of Religion, Toronto University, 2010, pp.101-102

6. *ppadi mērpadiyār Paṭṇi Anandhammāl*
7. *cēyitha tiruppaṇi Sālivāhana sakam*
8. *1794 varudam sēllum piṇasōthi varudam 1794*

This inscription speaks about the service rendered to the *Samādhi* shrine or its construction at the *Kalvi mutt* in Villianūr for ‘Vilvanallūr Mēyjnāna Māmuṇi Dēsikar’, by one Āṇandhammāl, who was the wife of Vēṅkitasāmi Mudaliār, belongs to the Tuḷuva Vēllāla tradition of Rāyavēlūr, in the *Saka* year 1794 (1871 C.E.)³⁴.

Inscription in the Kalvi Mutt – Samādhi Shrine at Villianūr-II

1. *Kaliyuga sigārtham 4040*
2. *Vigāri varudam Vaikāśi mātham 20 m Nāl*
3. *Tiruvakkarai Āthinam kalvimadāthi-*
4. *pathi gurumuhūrtha kōvil tiruppani*
5. *ceivitha dharmakartha Pudukvai*
6. *Vallur Mēzhivān gōthiram*
7. *Taraghu Suppurāya Mudaliār Kumā*
8. *ran Arunāchala Mudaliār*
9. *tharumam*
10. *subhamasthu – Śivamayam.*

This inscription speaks about the service rendered or renovation made by one of the trustees Arunachala Mudaliār, son of Taragu Suppurāya Mudaliār, who belongs to the Pudukvai Vallur Mēlivān gōthira to the *Samādhi* shrine of the pontiff of *Kalvi matha* of Villianūr which belongs to the Tiruvakkarai Āthinam, on 20th day of the Tamil month Vaikāśi of Tamil year Vigāri, of Kaliyuga sigārtham 4040³⁵.

The Dairy of Āṇanda Raṅga Piḷḷai (1709-1761)

Āṇanda Raṅga Piḷḷai, the Chief Dubash of the French in Puducherry is famous for his voluminous Diary covering a period of twenty five years until his death, in which he records many events from the year 6th September 1736 to January 1761 C.E. recorded encyclopedic information pertaining to the contemporary happenings in India and elsewhere. Among his predecessors or contemporaries, none can match him in terms of the wealth he possessed, the influence he wielded within the French Company and outside in the contemporary political and economic fields, and above

³⁴ See also G. Vijayavenugopal (ed.), *Op.cit.*, (Villianūr Inscription No. 416), p. 372. And also see Villianūr N. Venkatesan, *Op.cit.*, p.185.

³⁵ This inscription belongs to the 19th century, (C.E. 1839), but the *Saka* year (4040) mentioned in it was erroneous. See Villianūr N. Venkatesan, *Op.cit.*, p.184; see G. Vijayavenugopal (ed.), *Op.cit.*, p. 372.

all in sticking to his native mind, beliefs, customs and practices despite his high standing in the French society. In terms of his virtuous qualities of head and heart, intellectual and business capabilities, Ānanda Raṅga Piḷḷai can be said to be far ahead of his times, despite being a product of the 18th century south India³⁶. His sets of diaries were also used in this study as one of our primary sources of reference on the Siddha cult in Puducherry. In volumes I and II, Piḷḷai gave some references about the Bommaiya Mutt, Mortāṇḍi and Ambalaṭṭādum Mutt which continue to be well known *Siddha Kṣētras* in Puducherry even today. The diary of Ānanda Raṅga Piḷḷai also gives us some useful information in relation to the then celebrated Siddhas of Puducherry such as Bālayya Sāmi, Ambalathādum Sāmi etc. In fact, it is the very earliest and reliable source providing some useful information about the chronological position of some of the Siddhas of Puducherry.

Bommaiyā Mutt

Bommaiyā *mutt* is located in the Bommaiyaṛ Pālayam (which is named after Bommaiyyā). This *mutt* belongs to the part of Mailam Bommapura *Āthinam*. References are found in the Diary of Ānanda Raṅga Piḷḷai about the Bālaiyya Sāmy of the Bommaiya *mutt*. Even today it is in a well flourishing state. At present it is famous because of Siddhar Śivajñāni. Piḷḷai gives some of the relationship that prevailed between the French administration and the *mutt* in his Diary. Some of the excerpts taken from the Diary regarding those *mutts* are given below:

Dupleix's visit to Bommaiyyā Mutt

“Monday (14th December, 1744) or 3rd Margazhi of Raktakshi - This morning at 6, the Governor, M. Dupleix, who was at Mortandi Chavadi, repaired to my choultry at Tiruvengadapuram, break-fasted there at 8, dined at noon, and at 4 in the afternoon, proceeded to the Matt of Balaiya Swamiyar at Bommaiya Palaiyam, to pay him a visit. The Governor and his wife presented a gift of six yards of broad-cloth

³⁶See Alalasundaram, R.1998. *The Colonial World of Ananda Ranga Pillai 1736 - 61*. Pondicherry; Chandramouli, N., “Notices of Telugu Land, Language and People in the Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai: The Dubash of the French in Pondicherry (1736-61)”, *Proceedings of the Andhra Pradesh History Congress. 35th Session*, Kuppam, 2010, pp. 229-236; “Memory, Metaphor and Text: Bobbili War in the Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai (1736-61), the Dubashi of French in Pondicherry” in Chandramouli, N., (ed) *Poduke –bandikere-Puducheri – Pondicherry: Researches into the History & Culture of French and Indian Pondicherry*. Puducherry: Historical Society of Pondicherry, 2015, pp. 37-48; Srinivasachari, C.S., *Ananda Ranga Pillai: The ‘pepys’ of French India*, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1940 (Reprint 1991), pp. 339-345.

and two bottles of rose-water to the Swamiyar, bowed very respectfully, and saluted him. He thereupon gave them his blessing. They afterwards proceeded to Puliyantoppu, here they partook of some refreshments, and drank coffee and thence they returned to Mortandi chavadi”³⁷.

Death of the Bālaiyya Swāmi

“Saturday, 21st May 1746, or 11th Vaikasi of Akshaya... This afternoon at about 2, Balaiya Swamiyar, the chief of the Matt of Bommaiya Palaiyam, quitted this world for Kailasa. He was installed in the year Subhakritu (1722), and served twenty four and odd years. During his tenure of office, all the subordinate ascetics were like so many Balaiya Swamies, each being an independent governor. They have ruined the institution, and brought discredit on it. What the character of his successor will be is not known. This disposition of the deceased was more that of a cow than a human being. Such was the will of God”³⁸.

Death of the Ambalaṭṭādum Swāmi

In his *Dairy*, Piḷḷai refers about the death of Ambalathādum Sāmy. The description given him regarding his death is more resembles to the final stage of the Siddhas i.e. the *Samādhi* of the Siddhas. Besides, the 10th Pontiff of this mutt Nāgaliṅga Swāmy is also mentioned in the work of C.S. Murugesan³⁹ as a Siddhar. The Dairy narrates the incident of the death of Ambalathādum Sāmy is as follows.

“This night, two Indian hours after sunset, Ambalattadum Aiyar, the priest of the Vikrapandi Chettis who reside here, expired. His corpse was interred in a sitting posture, in the premises of the very matt over which he presided. Having had a presentiment of his approaching end, he, on Sunday the 26th Ādi [7th August 1746], nominated Kanakasabhai Tambiran as his successor. The latter, who had a tangled head of hair, was, up to the time of his appointment, his personal attendant, escorted him to men of consequence, and helped in superintending the affairs of the institution. Nominating as his successor, the retiring priest placed on his neck the sacred rosary, composed of clusters of beads-five in each-which he had hitherto worn, and prostrated himself in homage at his feet. The ascetics present, and all his disciples, followed his example. Then, addressing the assembly, he said: “I have installed this man as your head. I shall betake myself tomorrow evening to Kailasa. You must take care of the matt, and manage its affairs efficiently”. His death took place as he had predicted. His successor, a handsome

³⁷ J. Frederick Price, (ed.), *The Private Dairy of Ananda Ranga Pillai, Vol. I*, Superintendent, Govt. Press, Madras, 1904, p. 264. (Henceforth *Dairy*)

³⁸ *Dairy, Vol. II*, 1907, p. 32

³⁹ C.S.Murugesan, *Puducherry Siddhargal*, Shankar Pathipakam, Chennai, 2007, pp. 35-42

person with a bright face, is about forty-five years old, and seems to be fitted for the office”⁴⁰.

Turaiyūr Pacchai Kandappaiyar and Installation of Bālaiyya Swāmi

“Thursday, 27th October 1746, or 14th Arppisi of Akshaya. The following was the principal event of today. This morning, at about five or six Indian hours after sunrise, Turaiyur Pachai Kandappaiyar, who had been leading the life of an ascetic on the Paḷani hills, was installed as the head of the matt of Balaiyar, at Bommaiya palaiyam. Owing to the incapacity of Balaiyar, who died on the 11th of Vaigasi [21st May] last, each subordinate Tambiran⁴¹ was allowed to exercise uncontrolled powers, and in consequence of this, the institution was very badly managed. The conduct, efficiency, luck, and quality of the administration, of the man installed, this day, remain to be seen.

I intended being present at the ceremony, but could not attend, as I was then very busily engaged. I, however, forwarded, through Arumuga Pandaram, two yards of red broad-cloth”⁴².

“Pachai Kandaiyar of Turaiyur, who had come to assist at the installation of Balaiya Swami, and who was on his way back to Turaiyur, intimated his desire to visit Pondichery. I obtained a pass for him, to enter the town, and he accordingly came”⁴³.

“Subsequently, I brought before the Governor the Pandarams⁴⁴ who were the bearers of gifts of fruit, sugar, and sugarcandy, which Balaiya Tambiran, of Bommaiypalaiyam, had sent to him on the occasion of his installation. I obtained for them permission to take away the contributions to the matt, which had been detained at the custom-house. The Governor directed me to issue the necessary notice to the officer in charge”⁴⁵.

“In the afternoon, I went to the gardens, and thence to Kambalaiyar’s house, to visit Pachai Kandaiyar, who was staying there, and who had come from Turaiyur, to assist at the installation of Balaiya Swami. I took with me two yards of broadcloth, which I presented to Pachai Kandaiyar, before whom I prostrated myself. He is a man of pleasing manners, a great scholar, and possesses a deep knowledge of Sanskrit and Tamil. I therefore conversed with him for about two Indian hours.

⁴⁰ Dairy, Vol. II, pp. 180-181

⁴¹ *Tambirān* means a quasi-monk, bound to celibacy; in token of which he wears red garments, wears his hair tangled, is generally learned, and is qualified to perform the *Śiva-pūjā*.

⁴² Dairy, Vol. III, 1914, p. 41

⁴³ Dairy, Vol. III, p. 65

⁴⁴ *Paṇḍārams* are the Hindu mendicants in the south of India, of the *Sūdrā* caste; often officiating as ministrant priests in the temples of Siva.

⁴⁵ Dairy, Vol. III, p. 72

Having obtained his permission to depart, I went at 6, to the Governor's house”⁴⁶.

As said before, royal patronage to the Nātha-Siddha cult in South India during medieval period is very limited. A few available inscriptions starting from the early decades of the 11th century speaks about Āthinātha, the first of the legendary five Āthināthas (Āthipañchakam) and installation of individual sculptures of Gōrakṣanātha, Caturarāninātha (Chaurāṅginātha?), Mañjulanātha, Mēghanātha, Sāraṅgadhāranātha in the temples maintained by Kālamukha teachers. These inscriptions indicates that at least by 10th century C.E., in the Karnāṭaka and the Āndhra regions the Nātha-Siddha cult was so popular that the native as well as conquering rulers started patronising the cult. By early 12th century, the cult appears to have spread into the Tamiḷ region also as indicated by the Tirubhuvanai (Tirunāvukarasar *Matha*) inscriptions of Kulottuṅga Cōḷā I, which speaks about a large population of Māhēśvarās of the Kālamukha/Nātha-Siddha faith. It is pertinent to mention here that the Cōḷā rulers had Kālamukha teachers as the royal preceptors who were endowed with agricultural lands, *mathas* and Śiva temples. But in the Tamiḷ region we do not have any evidence of the temples of Nātha-Siddhas as found in Karnāṭaka and Āndhra regions. The only exception in this case is the Śiva temple of Bāhūr, datable to the reign of Raṣṭrakūṭa king Kṛiṣṇa III which is the only Śiva temple named as a Nātha (*Mūlanātha*).

Emergence of the Temple as a Centre of Tāntric Rituals

The Bhakti cult of the Tamiḷ region gave significant impetus to the construction of Temples in which the image or icon of the god or goddess was the medium through which a devotee can offer or transfer his devotion to God, through *pūjā*. The origin of image worship in India can be traced back to the early *Vēdic* times. To a *sādhaka* who can visualize and experience the supreme god (*parabrahman*) in him, there is no need for a temple or an icon of God; but to those who cannot attain this kind of realization, on the physical plane, the image of the god in a temple provide the necessary platform for the spiritual enhancement and emancipation. Temples of the medieval period occupy an important place in *tāntric* literature. The texts of the Śaiva Siddhānta of the south, contain lot of description and

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p. 81

discussion on the construction of temples, installation of deities and temple rites in *tāntric* mode⁴⁷. Based on the *tāntric* ideas, there was a spurt of temple building activity in South India from the beginning of the 11th century C.E. The activity got speeded up in the second half of the 11th century and continued till the end of the 12th century. Some of the temples of the 12th century also contain parts of the 11th century architectural members, which show the different phases of their renovation. Therefore major temples of this region are the products of at least two phases of architectural activity: a) Temples were constructed towards the end of the 11th century and rebuilt or renovated in the second half of the 12th century. b) After the mid-12th century, the building and patronage activity got an unprecedented impetus. The building activity slowed down after the commencement of 13th century and stopped by the mid-13th century. Temple building certainly continued in the second half of the 13th century also, but it was the final phase of the architectural activity of this region. The temples which can be assigned to the 13th century show a decadent phase. A Few of the temples of south Indian region were repaired or altered in the late Vijayanagara period⁴⁸.

Nātha Cult during the Vijayanagara Period

The Rāyās of Vijayanagara consciously promoted and patronized diverse sectarian religious cults⁴⁹. The Nātha cult attained prominence with the establishment of the pan-south Indian Vijayanagara Empire. The Siddhas and Nāthas were elevated to a superhuman status during this period. However, there are no clearly identifiable extant independent sculptures or large reliefs of either the Siddhas or the Nāthas found in any temples of the period. On the contrary, among the Vijayanagara sculptures, curious ascetic Figures seated on different creatures are found mostly on the pillar reliefs and outer walls and gopuras of the temples.

⁴⁷ Gavin Flood, *The Tantric Body: The Secret Tradition of Hindu Religion*, I.B. Tauris, London, 2006, p. 82. Temple acted as a great center for executing or employing such *Tāntric* rituals, as quoted in the *tāntric* texts. Temple *tāntrism* continues into present times in temples of Tamilnādu and especially in Kēraḷā. In fact, constructions of temples are also based on *Tāntrik* ideals. Even sculptures of the more extreme cults of goddesses, the *Yōginis* were also largely expressed in temples during the early medieval period.

⁴⁸ Rajaram Hegde, *Temple Patronage in Medieval Karnataka: with special reference to the Banavasi-12000*, Lecture Series 12, ICHR, SRC, Bangalore, 2006, p. 5

⁴⁹ Apart from Hindu religion, many cults and religious traditions including Jaina and Islamic were incorporated by the Vijayanagara rulers. Dallapiccola, *Op.cit.*, p. xiv.

During the one and half centuries of the history of the Vijayanagara Empire under the Saṅgama and Sāluva dynasties (1336-1505 C.E.), temple art and architecture had flourished. Particularly in the sixteenth century, the activities of temple construction made significant progress. Among the various rulers, Kṛṣṇadēvarāyā was one of the most celebrated emperors of Vijayanagara Empire. He started his rule with the innovatory architectural additions and became the generous patron of temple constructional activities. Though he was in power for a short span of two decades (1509-1529 C.E.), he made generous grants to all temples, as well as made additions to the existing temples and to some extant built entirely new temples in many parts of south India⁵⁰. The principal reason behind the construction of the temples by the kings is that it will add glory the deity as well as the king⁵¹. The temples built during his period and by his successors all portioned with the tāntric sculptures, which mostly included the low-relief sculptures of the Nātha-Siddhas.

Thus, under the Tuḷuvas starting from Kṛṣṇadēvarāyā, large temple complexes, with multiple pillared halls and colonnades, especially the *mandapas* to facilitate the increase in temple rituals and festivals, with towering entrance *gōpuras* and often with colonnaded chariot-streets or bazaars in front, came into existence. The *gōpura* is principally a development of the 11th century middle-Cōlā period of temple construction in Tamiḷnādu. After a long gap of hundred years, the Vijayanagara architects revived the *gōpura* structures as well as they made it a pan-south Indian feature of temple architecture, spreading across the whole of Tamiḷnādu and much of Āndhra Pradesh and Karnāṭaka⁵², in which most of the *Tāntric* images portraying the *tāntric* rites, images of Nātha-siddhas are sculpted in different styles and forms, either in stucco in the upper part of the *gōpura* or in the granite in the lower parts of the *gōpura*. More particularly, the spread of sculpting *tāntric* images in the pillar reliefs gained popularity only during the Vijayanagara period.

⁵⁰ Y. Subbarayalu, 'The Pilgrimage of Kṛṣṇadevaraya and its Political Implications', in Shrinivas Ritti and Y. Subbarayalu (eds.), *Vijayanagara and Kṛṣṇadevaraya*, ICHR (SRC), Bangalore, 2010, p. 82

⁵¹ Gavin Flood, *Op.cit.*, p. 80

⁵² Anila Verghese, 'Architectural Innovations of Kṛṣṇadevaraya on the Occasion of His Coronation', in Shrinivas Ritti and Y. Subbarayalu (eds.), *Op.cit.*, 2010, pp. 13,24

Spread of the Tāntric Art in other parts of south India

Within a span of nearly 200 years of Vijayanagara rule, the brick masonry temples were converted into stone, the stone temples were dismantled and reshaped or the same temples were added with new components. All this happened along with the growth of artisanal communities in south India and also in the inter-regional influence of classical patterns either by direct migrations or through education network⁵³. It is said that many service caste people migrated from Āndhra Pradesh and Karnāṭaka during the reigns of the Telugu rulers in some parts of Tamiḷnāḍu. Mark (2001) writes that when Kṛṣṇadēvarāyā (1509-1529 C.E.) was ruling Vijayanagar⁵⁴, he extended his territory to various parts of the Tamiḷ country. In order to control and dominate Tamiḷnāḍu, he sent Narasa Nāyaka to rule Chēra territories and Nāga Nāyaka to rule Pāṇḍya territories, which were in Tamiḷnāḍu. So accompanying the warriors of Narasa Nāyaka and Nāga Nāyaka, some people were taken for cooking food, clothing and shelter. Thus, there may be a possibility that during this time along with other service caste people, other skilled persons like artisans, sculptors, masons, etc. also migrated to Tamiḷnāḍu and engaged in the temple building activities. Along with these artisans, the art and the *Tāntric* Nātha-Siddha cult might have spread to other parts of the south India.

Sculptural Representations of Nāthas and Siddhas

In the present study, iconography plays an important role in identifying the images of the Nāthas, Siddhas and their practice of *Tāntric Yōga*. Like many other sculptures, these images give visual support for understanding the existing cult of Siddhas, Nāthas and other *Yōgis*, their activities and their significance. At the same time, the basic art representations of the Siddhas and Nātha Siddhas in the temple sculptural art of various periods are mostly identified on the basis of textual descriptions which indicate the wide popularity of the Siddha cult all over South India with some exemptions, at least from 16th century and after. Most of these sculptures are found in the pillars of the *maṇḍapas* in the temples.

⁵³ Rajaram Hegde, *Op.cit*, p. 3

⁵⁴ See Mark, *Arunthathiyar: Vāḷum Varālaru*, (Tamiḷ), (*An exclusive history of the Arunthathiyars*), Nāṭṭār Vajakkāriyal Āyvu Maiyam, St. Xavier College, 2001

As discussed earlier, Śrīsailam has been an important *Siddha-Kṣētra* which was famous as the seat of the Atimārgika sects such as Pāśupatās, Kāpālikas, Kālamukhas, Navanāthās and Śāktas. The exterior wall of the Mallikārjuna temple with its reliefs is generally believed to be of the early Vijayanagara period. The Telugu work *Navanāthacharitramu* by the poet Gaurana, completed in the first quarter of the fifteen century, mentions the names of some members of this cult who preached in Āndhra. It is interesting to note that the poet dedicated this work to god Mallikārjuna of Śrīsailam.

In the 15th and early 16th centuries, there is a profusion of images of ascetics, *Yōgic* exercises and other *tāntric* elements and scenes in almost all the temples of south India. For the identification of the Nātha Siddha representations the most important location is the *prakāra* wall of the Mallikārjuna Temple at Śrīsailam, Āndhra Pradesh and the Hazararama temple of Hampi, Bellary district, Karnāṭaka. Both these temple complexes have the early forms of Vijayanagara Art. At these two places the representations of the Navanāthas, *yōgic* exercises, and other *tāntric* elements like *yantras*, *cakras* and sexual scenes portray the early stylistic forms, such as low-relief engraving, archaic features of representing the head dress etc. Among all the temple of south India in only two temples: Sōmēśvara temple at Ulsūr, near Bangalore and Jalakṇṭēśvara temple, Kalāsipālayam also near Bangalore, Karnāṭaka we have noticed the entire set of the representations of the Navanāthas. Starting from these temples, the present study surveyed the entire south India to study and understand the stylistic variations in the Nātha Siddha representations. The sculptural data is analysed by studying the literary descriptions of the Nātha Siddhas, their ritualistic practices, philosophy and personal adornments, appendages etc, collected during the latter part of 18th century by the pioneers such as G.W Briggs which helped in understanding the intricacies of the Nātha Siddha representations.

The Nava Nāthas

Navanātha sculptural representations and other sculptures of Siddhas, *Yōgis* and *Yōgic* exercises, *Tāntric* symbols, rituals etc., found in the every nook and corner of Vijayanagara temple art have no evolutionary stages so far the temple art is concerned. On the contrary, during the Vijayanagara period itself and afterwards one

can observe many stylistic developments in their depictions. Out of the innumerable low relief sculptures of the Vijayanagara period which runs into several thousand across South India to identify the Nātha-Siddhas and other related representations of *tāntric* art, we searched for textual references which provide physical description of the Nātha-Siddhas, their appearance personal appendages, hairdo, manners and practices, ritual paraphernalia and their body language. Briggs in his monumental work had widely quoted from literary and oral traditions, from Punjab, Kaśmir, Nepal, Bengal and other places, which describe the above features of Nātha-Siddhas. Even the *dōhās* of Kabir give a description of the *Nāthapanthis* such as ear-rings, the patched coat, postures, the horn, ashes, the wallet, the club, matted hair and their faults of drinking and hypocrisy⁵⁵. Interestingly, even the Kālamukhas are described as wearing a horn to produce the sound of a roar of a lion which indicate the assimilation of the *Tāntric* sects of the different parts of the sub-continent under the banner of the Nātha-Siddhas by the end of 13th century. Briggs also has recorded the descriptions of Mīṇanātha and Gōrakṣanātha which are very helpful in understanding the intricacies of the Navanātha representations of the Vijayanagara period.

Since the Navanātha cult absorbed most of the regional idioms, several lists of Navanāthas appear in different literary works. Even at a sub-regional level, different works have different lists of Navanāthas as such identification of the Navanāthas in the sculptural art of the Vijayanagara period, poses a challenge and an attempt is made to identify them on the basis of their vehicles which are prefixed to their personal names (such as *Mīṇa*-nātha/fish, *Vyāli*-nātha/vyāli, mythical animal, *Nāga*-nātha/snake, *Kūrma*-nātha/tortoise, *Varāha*-nātha/boar etc) in the literary descriptions and legendary stories. To understand the *Tāntric* elements in the Vijayanagara art also the *Tāntric* literary works discussed in chapter two are useful.

G.W. Briggs in his work mentions the names of *Nava-Nāthas* as *Gōrakṣanātha*, *Matśyēndranātha*, *Carpatanātha*, *Maṅgalanātha*, *Ghugonātha*, *Gōpinātha*, *Prānanātha*, *Suratanātha* and *Cambanātha*. (But he didn't speak about their representations in the sculptural art)⁵⁶. M.S. Purnaliṅgām Piḷlai also gives the names of nine famous Siddhas, as *Sathya nāthar*, *Sakotha nāthar*, *Āthi nāthar*, *Anāthi*

⁵⁵ See Briggs, G.W, *Gorakhnāth and the Kānphatayogis*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1938. pp. 238-9

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, p.136.

nāthar, *Vakuli nāthar*, *Mathaṅka nāthar*, *Macchēndra nāthar*, *Kadēndra nātha* and *Kōrakka nāthar*. From among many such lists in circulation during that period, the following common names viz., *Mīṇanātha* (*Matśyēndranātha*), *Chaurāṅgi* (*Jālandhara*), *Gōrakṣanātha*, *Virupākṣanātha*, *Mēghanātha*, *Siddha Nāgārjuna*, *Khanikanātha*, *Mañjunātha*, *Buddha Siddha* or *Vyāli Siddha* are identified from the Telugu literary work *Nava Nātha Charitra* by Gourana⁵⁷ (see appendices of the lists of Nātha Siddhars)

For the identification of the navanāthas in a group, the sculptural reliefs at Ulsūr, Kalāsipālayam and Villianūr are the pioneering examples. Here there is a set of nine sages each seated on a mythical creature. The completeness of such a group in a Śaiva temple enable one to tentatively presume that these are meant to depict the *navanāthas*⁵⁸. Therefore, before discussing about the Navanātha sculptures in other parts of south India, it is better to have a clear idea about the depictions of such sculptures at Ulsūr. Śrisailam and Hampi are two of the temple complexes of south India, where more representations of such Nātha-Siddhas on strange creatures are found in low – relief engravings besides the representations of the *yōgic* postures, ordinary Siddha Nāthas and other *tāntric* representations, which are stylistically datable to the early Vijayanagara art of south India.

In the Ulsūr Somēśvara temple, on the south wall of the *ardhamanḍapa*, there found depictions of the navanāthas in a variety of poses with huge coffiures, holding attributes such as *kamaṇḍala*, *danda* (staff) and so on. From east to west the nine sculptures of the Nāthas appear in the following order: seated respectively on a Tortoise, *Vyāli*, Lion, Fish, Scorpion, Snake, Antelope, Boar and Tiger. Verghese states that, “since they are seated on extraordinary *vāhaṇas* such as bear, lion, snake, scorpion, tortoise, fish and other mythical animals, one can presume that these reliefs are representations of some semi-deified saints and not of living human beings”⁵⁹.

In the first representation of these reliefs (Fig.14), a Nātha is shown seated on a on a tortoise (*Kūrmanātha*). His right leg is folded resting on the tortoise. His right

⁵⁷ T. Koteswara Rao, *Op.cit*, p. 35, see also N. Chandramouli, *Op.cit*, 2002.

⁵⁸ Anila Verghese, ‘A Rare Depcition of Nine Yogis in the Somesvara Temple, Ulsoor’, in *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bombay*, Mumbai, Vol. 75, 2001, p. 186.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 179-180.

hand is resting on his right leg. He is folded and resting his left hand on his left leg knee. He is shown with rings on his both wrists, cross bands on his chest, wearing a loin cloth (*laṅgōti*) and *kunḍalas* on his ears. The second representation is of the Nātha on a mythical animal *Vyāli* having elephant trunk, and lion's body. *Vyāli* is in a striding posture as its' trunk is shown lifted upwards. His right is folded and right hand is resting on it. His left hand is resting on the left knee. He is wearing big *kunḍalas* on both the ears and cross bands on his chest. Bangle like ring is also visible on his hands. His head is slightly raised as if he is looking upwards (Fig.15). The third Nātha in this series is seated on a striding lion. His head is slightly tilted upward. He is wearing *kunḍalas* on both the ears, cross band on his chest, rings on his arms and wrists. He is wearing a *laṅgōti*. His right hand is resting on his right leg and his left leg is resting on his left knee. An anklet is also shown on his right leg (Fig.16). Next in the order is the legendary Mīṇanātha. He is depicted seated on fish as his right hand is resting on his right knee. His left hand is resting on the fish. He is wearing bangle like rings in his both arms and wrists, a thick necklace like ornament, a *yōga-daṇḍa* is placed behind his right hand, a round wallet is tied on slightly below his left shoulder; he is having the matted hair and wearing big *kunḍalas* on his ears. His head is slightly tilted upwards as he is facing his right side. The fish is also clearly depicted in an artistic manner (Fig.17). Next to him is a Nātha seated on a scorpion⁶⁰ (Bhairava Nātha). He is wearing the *kunḍalas*, cross band on his chest, along with a medallion in it. Rings in his arm and wrists; a *laṅgōti*, with his right hand he is holding a deer horn in his mouth. His left hand is resting on his folded left knee. Right leg is folded down and resting on the scorpion. A round wallet is shown on his left shoulder. A trident (*triśūla*) with a long shaft is shown behind the left shoulder (Fig.18). The next one is seated in a relaxed posture on a coiled cobra with unfurled hood (*Nāga Nātha*). The ascetic wears a thick necklace from which hangs a fairly large object, probably the deer horn. A round wallet is attached to his left shoulder. Large earrings, suspended from his elongated ears, rest on his shoulders (Fig.19). The next is

⁶⁰ In any of the lists of Navanāthas, do we come across a name Bhairavanātha. The Nātha seated on a scorpion is identified as Bhairavanātha on the basis of the representations of scorpion as the *lāṅchana* of Bhairava in one of the Bhairava sculptures at the Śrisailam (see Fig. 57). However, there is a description of one Vairavanātha in the list of Siddhas of Tamil tradition. Scorpion under feet of the Bhairava is also found in a dilapidated sculpture at Mūlanātha temple in Bāhūr. Similar representations of Bhairavanātha are found at Viriñjipuram, Jalakaṇṭhēśvarā temple at Vēllore, Villianūr, Nandi, Ulsūr, Kalāsipālayam, Hampi and in few other temples.

Chauraṅginātha⁶¹ seated comfortably, by hanging his legs freely on the caparisoned deer as if riding it by holding the bridle/reins in his left hand which is tied to its mouth. A wallet is tied to his left arm, and bangle like rings are found on his both wrists and arms, big *kuṇḍalas* on his ears, and necklace like ornament are clearly visible. His hair is piled in a knot on the top of his head. Interestingly, he is depicted as holding the deer horn in his right hand as he is producing the *Siṅganātha* –‘a roar of a lion’ (Fig.20). Next is the Nātha seated on a boar. His head is tilted slightly upward, and he is wearing the *kuṇḍalas* on his ears, cross bands on his chest with a medallion and bangle like rings on his both arms and wrist. His right hand is resting on his right leg and left hand in *lōla-hasta* posture, resting on the left knee (Fig.21). The last *yōgi* is Gōrakṣanātha seated on a tiger. His head is tilted downward and resting on his hands which are resting on his folded right knee. His left leg is folded and resting on the tiger. He is wearing the *kuṇḍalas* and rings on his wrists. A round wallet is also visible on his left arm (Fig.22). Anila Verghese⁶² in one of her papers gives a different description of the Nātha Siddha representations of this temple, some of which are wrongly identified. For example, she identified one ascetic on a *makara* (crocodile), while there is no such representation. From the extraordinary nature of the *vāhaṇas*; it is obvious that these sculptures could not portray living ascetics. The *rudrākṣā* beads and disheveled hair, that adorn some of these strange *yōgis* and the trident found with some of them, reveal the Śaiva nature of these ascetics.

The presence of these nine sages as a group at Ulsūr and Kalāsipālayam temples in the post-Vijayanagara art is an extremely rare occurrence. No such full group is found either at Śrisailam or in Hampi or in any other temple in south India. In the examples of Śrisailam, Āndhra Pradesh, in one panel, Mīṇanātha, Gōrakṣanātha and Chauraṅginātha are shown on their respective vehicles (see Fig.1). On another panel, Mīṇanātha and Bhairavanātha are shown facing each other on their respective vehicles. From its appearance it looks as if they are involved in a religious debate (see Fig.2). In another panel, Mīṇanātha is shown as if observing the meditation of his disciple Gōrakṣanātha, who is shown in a meditative posture, placing both his hands

⁶¹ This Nātha seated on an antelope is identified as Chauraṅgi, also known as Kānu-pa or Kṛīṣṇapāda deer/Antelope in Śanskrit language is called ‘*Kṛīṣṇamriga*’, and he is riding that animal.

⁶² Anila Verghese, *Op.cit*, 2001, pp. 180-184.

on the *Yōgadaṇḍa* over which his head is shown resting. He is depicted sitting on tiger skin (see Fig.23).

With this identification of the list of Navanāthas in the sculptural art of the Sōmēśvara temple, Karnāṭaka, in the following pages we will discuss, individually, the representations of the Nātha Siddhas along with their historical background, in the sculptural art of the south Indian temples belonging to the Vijayanagar and post-Vijayanagara periods.

1. *Matśyēndranātha* or *Mṛṇanātha*

Matśyēndranātha is believed to have lived in 9th - 10th centuries C.E. According to legends, he is the first incarnāte teacher of the *Nātha yōgi* movement and the reputed founder of the *Haṭha yōga* system, along with his disciple Gōrakṣanātha. He composed an important *Tāntric* work *Kaulajñanirnaya*, and also found one of the *Kaula* schools called *Yōgini-Kaula*⁶³. According to *Skanda Purāna*, Matśyēndranātha was born as Lokēśvarā on an inauspicious day, so his family threw him into the sea, where he was swallowed by a fish and overheard the secret, conversation about *yōga* between Śiva and Pārvati, on the shore of an island. Pārvati had fallen asleep but Lokēśvarā heard everything. In this version of the legend, Śiva is pleased and, as Lokēśvarā comes out of the fish, he gives him the name Matśyēndranātha, Lord of the Fishes⁶⁴.

Later versions of the legend say that Pārvati became angry with Lokēśvarā and banished him to Kadali, the Kingdom of Women, to forget the secrets of *yōga*. *‘The symbolism of the Matśyēndranātha legend involves the transmission or revelation of the yōga doctrine, and the increasing importance of haṭha yōga, associated with Gōrakṣanātha and the decline of earlier erotico-mystical practices symbolized by Kadali, the Kingdom of Women’*⁶⁵. At Kadali, he was rescued by his disciple, Gōrakṣanātha, disguised first as a dancing girl and then as a bee.

⁶³ N.N. Bhattacharyya, *op.cit.*, p. 78

⁶⁴ This story is carved on a panel of the *prakāra* wall of the Śrisailam temple in Āndhra Pradesh, with Lokēśvarā partly emerging from the mouth of a great fish. In the adjacent panel, Śiva is pointing at this fish, which has now completely swallowed Lokēśvarā, showing Pārvati where the listener is hidden.

⁶⁵ Richard Shaw, *Op.cit.*, p. 241

The sculptural representations of Matsyēndranātha or Mīṇanātha are the most numerous among the Nava Nātha representations of the Vijayanagara art. Mīṇanātha is found on the bottom of the north wall of the southern *gōpura* entrance of the Tirukāmēśvara temple at Villianūr of Puduchērry. In this Mīṇanātha is seated on a fish, his left leg is hanging on the fish and his right leg is folded upward and resting firmly on the body of the fish. Over his bent left leg his right hand is resting in a *lōla-hasta* pose. His left hand is resting on the fish. His hair is matted and long ears are visible. In his chest, he is wearing the deer horn as a medallion (Fig.24). On more than seven occasions, Mīṇanātha is represented on the pillared *maṇḍapas* and *gōpuras* of Tirukāmēśvara temple, Villianūr. Similar sculptures of Matsyēndranātha are frequently found in the pillar relief and *gōpura* walls of Villianūr Tirukāmēśvara temple and almost in all Śaivite temples of South India and to some extent in the Vaiṣṇava temples also.

One interesting sculpture of Matsyēndranātha or Mīṇanātha is found in the *arthamaṇḍapa* pillar of the Mūlanātha temple of Bāhūr in Puduchērry. It is carved as a mid-relief carving facing north. He is depicted seated on a fish with a matted and disheveled hair in the form of flaring fire. Around his neck he is wearing *rudrakśamāla*, a ring in his wrist and arms; in left hand is resting on the fish, and he is holding a stringed musical instrument which looks like *ēktāra vīna*⁶⁶ (Fig.26). In the Paṭṭināthar temple at Paṭṭisvaram, also Mīṇanātha is shown holding similar musical instrument. But in this example he is very crudely depicted (Fig.29). In one of the examples of the Tirukāmēśvara temple, Villianūr, Mīṇanātha is shown in a beautiful standing dancing posture of *dvibhaṅga mudrā* (Fig.44). Similar dancing posture of Mīṇanātha is also found in the Śiva temple of Lēpākṣi in Anantapur district of Āndhra Pradesh.

In many of the sculptural examples he is shown in *Yōgic* postures. For example at Nandi Beta in Chickballapur district of Karnāṭaka, he is depicted seated on a fish and performing a complex *Yōgāsana* known as *Ēkapāda Sirsāsana* in which balancing on both of his hands, he is shown holding his right leg on the neck behind

⁶⁶ G.W.Briggs records the ecstatic power of melodious music '*kiṇjuri*' which also the name of the musical instrument played by the Nātha panthis. The same is noticed in the hands of Kabir, Mīṇanātha and even the poets of the *Dasa* tradition of peninsular India.

the head (Fig.28). Exactly similar *yōgāsana* is shown in the Kōtē Veṅkatēśvara temple, Bangalore in which also Mīṇanātha is shown in that complex *Yōgāsana* called *Ēkapāda Sirsāsana* (Fig.36).

On one of the pillars of a *maṇḍapa*, at upper Ahobilam, Kurnūl district, Āndhra Pradesh, Mīṇanātha is shown in a preaching posture. Here he is shown as explaining something where his right palm is shown close to his mouth (Fig.38).

In one of the exquisite examples, perhaps the most beautiful of all the Mīṇanātha representations of the *Yōgic* posture in the sculptures of Upper Ahobilam, he is shown seated in a beautiful *dvibhaṅga* posture, holding his outstretched right hand on the *yōgadāṇḍa*, and placing the outstretched left hand on the bent left knee which is held in that bent posture with the help of *Yōgapattā*. The scales on the body of the fish are also beautifully rendered. At the shoulder level, the characteristic wallet is also designed in a beautiful shape. The head dress is also unique consisting of the garland of *rudrākṣa* beads and over it a spiked *kiritamakuta*. The ear rings are also characteristic of the Nātha Siddha forms (Fig.40).

A unique example of the Mīṇanātha representations, in the Paṭṭināthar temple of Paṭṭiṣvaram in Tamiḷnāḍu, He is shown in a seated posture on the fish holding a flywhisk (*chāmara*) in his right hand⁶⁷. This could be one of the *lānchanās* of Mīṇanātha, which was not shown in any other temple (Fig.30). Similarly, the example from the Vishnu temple at Tirukkurnkudi in Tirunelvēli district of Tamiḷnāḍu shows Him seated on a huge fish with the head of a crocodile. He is sailing on the fish in a *yōgic* posture of *arthaparyāṅkā sana*, held tightly with the help of *yōgapatta*. Behind him is shown a boat showing two sailors and the captain with the saddle. The head dress in the form of sundisk (halo) and the big *kuṇḍalas* are the finest examples of this category (Fig.25).

On the *prakāra* wall of Śrī Mallikārjuna temple at Śrisailam, Āndhra Pradesh, in the pillared *maṇḍapa* of Halsūr Somēśwara temple, Jalakantēśwara temple at Kalāsipālayam near Bangalore, the sculptures of Maṭsyēndranātha are artistically depicted. Particularly at Śrisailam, Maṭsyēndranātha is depicted with *jatamaṇḍala*,

⁶⁷ G.W.Briggs speaks about the use of a peacock feathered fan by the Nāthapanthis of Benaras region., see Briggs, *Op.cit.*p.23.

flaming hair encircling the head like rays of the Sun, which is the most characteristic hairstyle of the Siddhas and echoes a style of hairdo worn by Śiva (Figs.1, 2, 23&24). The Matsyēndranātha has his right hand resting on the tail of the fish. On the pillar of the *maharaṅgamaṇḍapa* in the Virupākṣa Temple at Hampi, he is elaborately decorated and rather stylized but the essential Siddha iconography is clearly found with flaming hair, giant round earrings, waistband, necklaces, armlets, and *yōgadaṇḍa*⁶⁸.

In some of the temples of Central, Coastal and South Tamiḷnāḍu viz., Trichy, Pērambalūr, Thūthukudi etc., Mīṇanātha sculptures are worshipped as *Kubērā*, the Lord of the Wealth. At Cheṭṭikuḷam Murugaṇ temple, which is located at a distance of eight kilometres from Ālathūr Gate, in the Pērambalūr District of Tamiḷnāḍu, there is a separate shrine for Kubērā with his wife Chitralekha. On one of the pillars of this temple, there are 12 sculptures of Mīṇanātha, which are here worshipped by the local people today as Kubērā. Each sculpture is assigned one zodiac sign. Particularly, one such sculpture of Mīṇanātha worshipped here as the Kubērā of *Viruchika Rāsi* (Scorpion Sign).

In the post –Vijayanagara period, commonly known as the Nāyaka period, the Nātha Siddha representations become gigantic in size and get transfereed from the medium of stone to that of the stucco sculpting. In the stone medium, the low-relief engravings are diminutive in size ranging between 20 -30 cms. When they are represented in the medium of stucco the size increase varying between 90 -100 cms. Another interesting feature of the stucco forms of the Nātha Siddhas is that only four Nāthas are represented: Mīṇanātha, Ṛṣabhanātha and Gōrakṣanātha and Varāhanātha. Besides these many stucco images portray *tāntric* elements such as sexual scenes and *Bhairavicakra*. Even these late forms of Nātha representations in stucco, the artists are careful in portraying all the characteristic appendages of the Nātha Siddhas and associated *tāntric* representations, exactly in the same manner as they are found in the miniature low-relief stone sculptures.

Scenes of interesting sculpture of Mīṇanātha in stucco form are found in the north-east corner of the second *gōpura* of Sri Bhaktavatchala Perumal Temple at

⁶⁸ Richard Shaw, *Op.cit*, p. 242

Tirukaṇṇamaṅgai in Nāgapattiṇ am District. In this sculpture, Mīṇanātha is depicted seated in yogic posture (*lalitasana*) on a fish and holding with his left hand the breast of a semi-nude woman standing beside him. The woman is shown holding or pulling the hair of Mīṇanātha. This may be a depiction of a legend which says that Pārvati became angry with Lokēśvarā and banished him to Kadali, the Kingdom of Women, to forget the secrets of *yōga*. Here, he was rescued by his disciple, Gōrakṣanātha, disguised first as a dancing girl and then as a bee. The symbolism of the Maṭsyēndranātha legend increases importance of *haṭha yōga* and other *yōga* doctrines, associated with Gōrakṣanātha and the decline of earlier erotico-mystical practices symbolized by Kadali, the Kingdom of Women'⁶⁹. Though the concept behind this sculpture remain obscure, it is right to point out here the words of Śivavākkiyar, even when a Siddha is enjoying the breasts of a woman, because of his disinterested attitude, he cuts away the knots of *karma* and becomes one who does not suffer rebirth⁷⁰. At the same time in another sculpture, located to the right of the above sculpture, a man is depicted pulling out the snake from the secret part of a woman. The nude woman is also holding the hair of the man with one hand and the tail of the snake with the other. 'Serpent stands for the cycle of years or the cycle of births'⁷¹. As snake is also considered as a symbol of rebirth, the depiction may portray as the man or the Siddha is cutting off the rebirth.

Many such stucco sculptures were frequently found on the *prakāra* wall, *gōpura dwāra* and pillar reliefs of the Tirukamēśwara temple at Villianūr, and at the outer wall of sanctum of Naraśimha temple at Siṅgarigudi. Besides, various *yōgic* postures of different ascetics are also depicted in *kudu* and *vyālavari* of the Madagadipattu, Tiruvaṇḍārkōil and almost in all Śaivite temples of South India.

⁶⁹ Richard Shaw, 'Shaivite Ascetic Iconography: Important Associations between Srisailam, Hampi-Vijayanagara and Sringeri', in Anila Verghese and Anna L. Dallapiccola (ed), *South India Under Vijayana gara: Art and Archeology*, OUP, New Delhi, 2011, p. 241

⁷⁰ T.N. Ganapathy, *The Philosophy of the Tamil Siddhas*, ICPR, New Delhi, 2004 (2nd Ed.), p.20; Śivavākkiyar Songs, No. 118, 177 in Tha. Kovendhan (ed.), *Siddhar Pātakaḷ*, Poombukar Pathipakam, Chennai, 1976, pp. 26, 35 respectively

⁷¹ T.N. Ganapathy, *Op.cit*, p.22

2. Gōrakṣanātha

Gōrakṣa literally means protector of herd. He has the distinction of founding the largest sect of *yōgins* in India. The followers of Gōrakṣa are popularly known as *nāths*, *yōgis* (*jōgis*), *Gōrakhnāthis* and *Kānpḥaṭas*. They are very familiar for their large ear-rings, usually of bone, that give them the name ‘Split ears’ (*Kānpḥaṭa*)⁷².

Gōrakṣanātha is considered to be the second *guru* of the Nātha *yōga* cult. He is described as *Paramahamsa*⁷³. The invention of the *Haṭha yōga* system is ascribed to him and he is also credited with the foundation of the *Kānpḥaṭa* order of *yōgis*, known as Gōrakṣanāthis⁷⁴. Gōrakṣanātha is considered to be the first disciple of Matśyēndranātha. It is also said that Matśyēndranātha gave birth to Gōrakṣanātha⁷⁵. In the north Indian tradition Gōrakṣa was a fisherman by caste, while in the Bengal tradition he was a cowherd. The *Tāntric* text ‘*Gōrakṣa-samhita*’ is associated with his name, and ‘*Gōrakṣa-pantha*’ in north India is regarded as an esoteric system connected with *Tantra* and *yōga*⁷⁶. *Gōrakṣagīta*, *Gōrakṣa Paddhāti* and *Siddha Siddhānta Paddhāti* are some of the literary compositions believed to have been written by Gōrakṣanātha. Possibly he belongs to 12th or 13th century⁷⁷. It is believed that *Gōrakṣa Nātha* was instrumental in the codification of the *Nātha panth* by bringing together 12 separate sects (*Barah panthi*) in various parts of the country.

All that we knew about Gōrakṣanātha is distorted with enormous magical folklore and sectarian mythology across the sub-continent from Nepal to Rājasthan, from Punjab to Bengal, from Sindh to the Deccan into the interior south. He is credited with the authorship of a treatise long became extreme entitles *haṭha-yōga* and a surviving *Gōrakṣa śataka*. A commentary on *Gōrakṣa śataka* entitled *Gōrakṣa*

⁷² Abhaya Datta, Keith Dowman and Hugh R. Downs, *Masters of Mahamudra: Songs and Histories of the Eighty Four Buddhist Siddhas*, 1985, p.84

⁷³ G.W.Briggs, *Op.cit.*, p.200

⁷⁴ N.N. Bhattacharyya, *op.cit.*, pp. 284-286

⁷⁵ Uma Sampath, *Sithaṭhamellam Sivamayam* (Tamil), Varam Pvt. Ltd, Chennai, 2006, p. 108

⁷⁶ N.N. Bhattacharyya, *op.cit.*, p. 286

⁷⁷ There are some controversy regarding the period of Matśyēndra and Gōrakṣa, who are contemporaries according to legends, but their periods are mentioned differently.

Paddhati the word *haṭha* by *ha*=sun and *ṭha*=moon; the union of moon and sun forming *yōga*. (*haṭhau*=sūrya-chandrau=prāṇāpanau) ⁷⁸

More interestingly, Gōrakṣanātha is also recognized by the Kāpālikas as one of their founders, and it is a theory worth considering that Gōrakṣanātha was the reformer of the Kāpālikas, who then became the nāthas. The Kāpālikas had their origins back in the 4th century, and still practiced low-level *Śakta-tantra*. Gōrakṣanātha was taught by both Mīṇanātha and Jālandhara, and his disciples were Vairāginātha and other nāthas. It is difficult to be more precise as to Gōrakṣanātha's dates than to say that he lived in the 10th century⁷⁹. His work on *Haṭha yōga* is called *Gōrakṣa-sataka*⁸⁰.

From Nepāl comes the popular legend that Śiva after he had recited the *Yōga* doctrine to Pārvatī, standing on the sea shore, while Matśyēndra (in the form of a fish) was listening, gave something to a woman to eat, with a promise that she would obtain a son. The woman did not eat the substance, but cast it upon a dung-hill. Twelve years later, Matśyēndra passed by the same spot and asked to see the child. He heard what the woman had done and asked her to search in the dung heap. She there discovered a boy of twelve years. That boy was named Gōrakṣnāth. Matśyēndranāth became his spiritual master and he served as a dutiful disciple⁸¹.

By his perfection in *yōgic* practices, Gōrakṣanātha was supposed to have attained superhuman powers. He turned the water of a well into gold and then into crystal. He created a sword which can break even the toughest rocks. He exercised absolute control over the nature also. When he entered a garden in Punjab along with his disciples, the entire garden became green and all the driedup lakes gets filledup

⁷⁸ Another text, the *Haṭhyōga Pradīpika* by Svātmarāma Svāmi uses and reproduces a number of stanzas from *Gōrakṣa Sataka* in which the utility of *āsanas*, methods of purifications and the significance of practice are highlighted with the repeated assurances that they will ensure destruction of oldage and death and conquers death (*mṛtyum jayati*) illustrate the real meaning and final orientation of all these techniques. See Micrea Eliade, *Op.cit.*, pp. 228-230

⁷⁹ Abhaya Datta, Keith Dowman and Hugh R. Downs, *Masters of Mahamudra: Songs and Histories of the Eighty Four Buddhist Siddhas*, 1985, pp.84-85

⁸⁰ Karel Warner, *A Popular Dictionary of Hinduism*, Curzon Press, U.K., 1994, p. 71. G.W.Briggs, gives the complete text and translation of the *Gorakṣa Sataka*.*op.cit.*pp.284-304.

⁸¹ G.W.Briggs, *Op.cit.*, p. 182. The same legend is also found in the Tamiḷ literary tradition and quoted by many authors on Siddha literature. See Ganamanjari Sampathkumar, *Sivamayam Kanda Siddhargal*, Sri Indhu Publications, Chennai, 2008.

with water. He can leave his physical body in a sleeping posture and travel into the nether world to interact with *Vāsukī*, the lord of snakes. An interesting aspect of his control over serpents is found in the legends which relate Gōrakṣanātha with serpent powers and functions⁸².

Gōrakṣanātha is having a unique magic bag, or wallet of wonderful potency, from which he used to draw various kinds of gifts such as barley grains, rice, apples, grapes, flowers, or sacred ashes (*vibhūti*) which beget male children to the devotees. With his magic sandals he can go to any place of his choice at the flick of the eye lid. He also has a magic carpet or mat which informs Gōrakṣanātha about the problems faced by his devotees⁸³. He is glorified as the reformer of the *Nātha panth* from the *Kaulācāra* into an orthodox, organized and canonized pantheon.

According to one legend popular in the Tamil country, Gōrakṣanātha rescued his teacher Matśyēndranātha, who was engaged in a family life with Premala, Queen of Malayāladēśa. Further, he found the opium (*kañja*) by performing a *Yajna*, which later became known as ‘*Gōrakṣa Mūligai*’ (Gōrakṣa Medicinal herb). About the attainment of his ‘*Siddhi*’, there exist several stories, according to one legend he attained his *siddhi* at Paḷaṇi (Dindigul District) and according to another legend, he attained his *Siddhi* at Pōrūr in Tamilnādu. Then it is also believed that he attained his *samādhi* at Vadakku Poigai Nallūr near Vēḷḷāṅkaṇṇi, where a big temple is constructed on his *samādhi* shrine. Similarly, it is believed that, Gōrakṣa stayed at Kōrkādu village of Puduchērry, which still exists between the highway of Bāhūr and Villianūr. There he performed ‘*Tapas*’ and attained ‘*Siddhi*’. Thus, the village is named after him as ‘Kōrakar (Gōrakhar) Kādu’ and later come to the current corrupted form ‘Kōrkādu’⁸⁴. Even today, at Kōrkādu there exists a temple dedicated to him and every year *Gurupūjā* being conducted to him by his devotees in a grand manner.

⁸² See Briggs, *Op.cit.*, pp.186-196.

⁸³ *Ibid*, pp.199-200.

⁸⁴ Uma Sampath, *op.cit.*, p. 106-7

In the sculptural form this Nātha is depicted as seated on a tiger or tiger skin⁸⁵. In one of the panels on the *prakāra* wall of the Śrisailam temple, Gōrakṣanātha is shown seated on a tiger along with the appendages like big *kuṇḍala*, cross bands and medallion, *rudrākṣamāla* in his chest, rings in his arms and wrists, matted hair, etc., his right hand is resting on his right leg knee in a *daṇḍa-hasta mudrā* and his left hand and left leg is resting on the back of the tiger. In opposite to Gōrakṣa, a Siddha is seated on a *yōga-daṇḍa* in a *padmāsana* with his both hands are resting on his respective thighs. He is also wearing the appendages like the Gōrakṣa as said above; under him a *kamaṇḍala* is placed. Their background resembles that they are meditating in the forest (Fig.46).

In the Bhōganandīśvara temple at Nandi, Chickballapur district, a sculpture of Gōrakṣanātha is found in the *mukhamaṇḍapa* pillar. In this He is seated on a tiger in *ardha padmāsana*. His right hand is resting on the right leg knee in a *katya valambita mudrā* and the left hand and left leg on the tiger's back in a *daṇḍa hasta mudrā*. He is wearing *kuṇḍala*, rings in arms and wrists, anklets in his legs, etc (Fig.47).

Another sculpture of Gōrakṣanātha is found in the Tirukāmēśvarar temple, Villianūr, on the lower portion of the *Gōpura*, just above the Mīṇanātha sculpture (see Fig.24). He is seated on a striding tiger. He is also wearing *yōga-paṭṭa* in his left leg and other similar appendages such as the horn, as in the case of Mīṇanātha. His left hand is resting on the left leg knee and his right hand is resting on his right thigh in a *katya valambita mudrā*. His hair do is similar to that of Mīṇanātha (Fig.49).

In the Rāmaliṅgēśvara temple at Āvani in Karnāṭaka, many sculptures of Gōrakṣa are found on the *ardhamaṇḍapa* pillars. One of them show Gōrakṣa seated on a tiger with his right leg hanging on the tiger and the left leg is folded and placed on the back of the tiger; his left hand is resting on his left knee in a *daṇḍa-hasta* pose. In his right hand, he is holding a fly whisk like ornament. The open mouth of the tiger seems to depict it as roaring (Fig.50).

⁸⁵ The motif of tiger is identified as the master of initiation in the Shamanic religions of Central Asia and Indonesia, where they are the vehicles to carry the neophyte into the jungle, where the jungle is the symbol of 'beyond'. Mircea Eliade, *Op.cit.*, p.306

In the Laxmi Narasimha temple at Lower Ahobilam, Kurnūl district, Āndhra Pradesh, Gōrakṣanātha is represented seated on a tiger, on the *adhistaṇa* panel of the *vāhana-maṇḍapa*. There are long *kuṇḍalas* on his ears and the medallion in his chest is clearly visible. He is seated on the tiger with his left hand resting on his left leg knee, and in the palm of his left hand he is resting his face; and his right hand is resting on his right thigh in *katya valambita mudrā* (Fig.51).

In a sculpture found on the pillar of the Nandi *maṇḍapa* of Tañjāvūr Brahādīśvara temple, Gōrakṣa is seated on a tiger in *lalitāsana*. He is wearing a *laṅgōti*, big *kuṇḍalas*, medallion on his chest, rings in his arms and wrists; and anklet in his legs. His right hand is in *daṇḍa-hasta mudrā*, resting on his right leg knee and his left hand is resting on a *yōga-daṇḍa*, which is placed on his left leg thigh (Fig.52).

On the pillars of the Tirukālukunṇam Murugaṇ temple, located Chengulpet District contains numerous sculptures of Gōrakṣa in different iconographical styles. In this Gōrakṣa is seated on a tiger in *lalitāsana*. Unlike other sculptures, in this, tiger is facing left, while in all other sculptures it is shown turning right. His matted hair, *kuṇḍala*, a deer horn as medallion, *yōga-patta* on his left leg as in Fig.49; a *laṅgōti*, anklets, a wallet on his shoulder are clearly depicted (Fig.54). In another sculpture of Gōrakṣa in the same temple shows Him seated on a tiger. His left hand is in *abhayamudrā* and his right hand is in *daṇḍa-hasta mudrā* resting on his right leg knee folded in a *rājalīlāsana*. His matted hair, *kuṇḍala*, and ornaments in his neck are clearly depicted (Fig.55). Very frequently, along with the sculptures of Mīṇanātha; one can find the large number of sculptures of Gōrakṣa in many temples of south India.

3. Chaurāṅgi or Kānu-pā or Kriṣṇapāda (Nātha on an Antelope)

Chandramouli states that *Nātha* seated on a deer can be identified as Chaurāṅgi or Kānu-pā or Kṛṣṇa pāda, because deer is also called as Kṛṣṇa Mriga⁸⁶. It is said that Chaurāṅgi was one among the five original Nātha Siddhas, who born from the legs of the mutilated corpse of *Ādinātha* and later cohabited with his stepmother, because of his attraction towards women. The Tañjāvūr Catalogue states that Ācāryā

⁸⁶ For more details see G.D.K. Supriya, *Tantric Elements in the Art of Srisailem*, Andhra Pradesh, unpublished M.Phil Dissertation, Department of History, Pondicherry University, 2008, p.76

Chaurāṅgi composed a *yōgic* work under the title *Vāyutaṭṭvopadēśa*⁸⁷. It is also said that Chaurāṅgi and Gōrakṣanātha are two important disciples of Matśyēndranātha; and also said he was one of the disciples of Jālandhara⁸⁸. In the Sahajiya Buddhist saint Kāṇhapāda (Kṛṣṇapāda) calls himself a Kāpālan⁸⁹.

A sculpture of Chaurāṅginātha riding a deer is found as a mid-relief sculpture on one *mukhamāṇḍapa* pillars of the Bhōganandīśvara temple at Nandi. His right hand is in *varada mudrā* and his left hand is holding the reins of the deer. Anklets on his legs; rings on his wrists, *kuṇḍalas* on his ears and a wooden staff like object (*daṇḍa*) behind him are clearly found in this sculpture (Fig.56). The sculptures like Chaurāṅginātha are also found on the *prākara* walls of Śrisailam Mallikāṛjuna temple, Āndhra Pradesh (see Fig.01) and in the Yōganandīśvara temple at Nandigrāma of Kōlār district in Karnāṭaka.

4. Bhairava Nātha (Nātha on a Scorpion)

The representations of an Nātha seated on scorpion are rare. Identifying this Nātha is difficult because he is not referred to in any of the literary works on the Nātha Siddhas. On the basis of the representation of a scorpion (as a *lānchana*) at the foot of a Bhairava sculpture on the *prakāra* wall of Śrisailam temple, Kurnūl district, Āndhra Pradesh, this Nātha seated on a scorpion is identified as Bhairavanātha. Scorpion is depicted as *kaṇṭhamāla* (neck ornament) on different forms of Siva such as Vīrabhadramūrti, AghōraŚiva, Aghōrastramūrti and Viśāpaharanāmūrti⁹⁰. The scorpion is also a sexual symbol, as in a Khajurāho carving of a woman removing her clothes when she discovers a scorpion hidden there. At the temple of sixty four *yōginis* at Hirāpūr in Orissa, there is a carving of an *yōgini* dancing on a scorpion. In

⁸⁷ N.N.Bhattacharyya, *Op.cit.*, pp. 285 and 79

⁸⁸ Abhaya Datta, Keith Dowman and Hugh R. Downs, *Masters of Mahamudra: Songs and Histories of the Eighty Four Buddhist Siddhas*, 1985, pp.79, 250

⁸⁹ From a historical point of view, Kaṇhas' mention of Kāpālika is the earliest reference to these ascetics in Bengal. His date is uncertain that probably flourished during 8th-12th centuries since Kāṇha is equated with Kṛṣṇapādā/Kāṇupā/Chaurāṅgi must have lived after 10th century. David N. Lorenzen, *Op.cit.*, pp.69-71

⁹⁰ Elements of Hindu Iconography, Vol.2, Part I, pp.179, 186, 198-99, 357-58, respectively

the Marathi tradition, there is a story of a Siddha named Khiluba, who is tested by the Goddess *Janai* and seven water goddesses by being placed on a mat of scorpions⁹¹.

Bhairavanātha does not seem to be a popular one to be included in the list of *Navanāthas* of the Saivite tradition or of the eighty four siddhas of the Buddhist tradition. Only in the Eighteen Tamil Siddhar tradition⁹² he is mentioned as ‘*vairavan*’. Interestingly, in the sculptural representations although few in number, he appears very prominently on equal terms as Mīṇanātha. At Śrisailam, he is shown seated on a scorpion and holds the tail of the scorpion with his left hand facing Mīṇanātha seated on a fish. Both of them are shown resting their right hands on *yōgadaṇḍa*. The symmetrical and iconographical association of the Matsyēndranātha and Bhairavanātha images at Śrisailam shows that he is equal in importance or may be a contemporary of Mīṇanātha. Bhairavanātha is included in the Navanātha representations of Jalakantēśvara temple (Kalāsipālayam, near Bangalore town, Karnāṭaka) and also in the Sōmēśvara temple (Ulsūr near Bangalore town, Karnāṭaka: see Figs.11 &18). Individual or independent representations of Bhairavanātha are rare.

In a sculpture found on the *mukhamāṇḍapa* pillar of the Ulsūr Sōmēśvara temple He is shown seated on a scorpion in a *padmāsana* pose. He is seated as folding his both legs together and his both hands are resting on his respective thighs. His matted hair, *kuṇḍalas* in ears, medallion on his chest is clearly depicted. The scales on the body of the scorpion are beautifully drawn (Fig.58).

Another sculpture of Bhairavanātha is found on the *vāhana maṇḍapa* pillars of Lower Ahobalam temple, Kurnūl district, Āndhra Pradesh. He is depicted as typically seated on a scorpion in *lalitāsana*, his right leg bent upward on which his right hand resting and his right leg is left free. His *kuṇḍala* on the ears, big medallion on chest, *laṅgōti* under the waist level are clearly depicted. He is shown with a crowned head (Fig.59).

⁹¹ *Ibid*, pp. 242-243

⁹² The name is found in the ‘*Siddha Vaitya*’ books as it is referred in his work in Tamil by Ganamanjari Sampathkumar, *Op.cit.*, See Appendix.No.

Bhairavanātha is also found in the sculptural art at Hampi and at Śrīngēri, and in both places, there are only two solitary examples. In the Tiruvēṅgalanātha Temple at Hampi, Bhairavanātha is shown seated in *sukhāsana*, on a scorpion. He has tufted hair, double armlets on the wrists, and is playing a flute or horn. To his right is a tall crossed stand suspended from which is a round object, which may his wallet. In the Viḍyāśaṅkarā Temple at Śrīngēri, there is a panel depicting Bhairavanātha in a meditational posture on a giant scorpion, Vyālinātha and an Nātha on a bear. At Hampi, Bhairavanātha is represented in one of the pillared *Maṇḍapas*. Interestingly on the Malyavanta hill there is a striking boulder carving of seated Bhairava with a scorpion at his feet.

5. Vyāli Nātha

The Vyālinātha is one among the Navanāthas. He is better known as Hādi-pā who wrote some treatises in Sanskrit on *Tāntric* cults, such as *Vajrayōginisādhana*, *Suddhivajrapradīpa*, *Śricakra-sambara-garba-taṭṭva-vidhi* and *Humkāra-cittavindu-bhāvana karma*⁹³. He is also known as Jalandranātha. Vyāli's name has many variants viz., Byāli, Bhāli, Byāri, Bāli, Pāli, Vyādi etc⁹⁴. However, in the book '*Masters of Mahāmudra*', he is listed last of the 'Eighty-four *Mahāsiddhas*'. The work mentions that Vyāli was born in a wealthy Brahmin family, in the land of Apatra⁹⁵. He attempted to prepare a recipe of immortality, but the potion had no effect. Therefore in anger he threw his alchemical manual into the River Ganges, during his 13th year of *Sādhana*. Then he became a wandering beggar. One day he met a courtesan on the banks of the river and narrated the incident. The courtesan gave him a book that she found in the river while bathing. On seeing that book Vyāli laughed and told her that it was the book that he threw in the river long ago. Later with the help of the courtesan, he again started his alchemical work and got success in preparing the immortal recipe. After partaking the potion, Vyāli and the courtesan attained the *siddhi* of deathlessness and settled in the land of Kilampara⁹⁶. This legend also

⁹³ N.N.Bhattacharyya, *Op.cit.*, p.79.

⁹⁴ See David Gordon White, *The Alchemical Body*, *Op.cit.*, p. 74

⁹⁵ Apatra may be a corruption of Aparantha, the ancient name of the western province of India. for more details see Abhaya Datta, et.al., *Op.cit.*, p. 382

⁹⁶ The Tibetans identify Kalimpara where Vyāli retreated with his elixir, with Adam's peak in Sri Lanka, see *Ibid*, p. 382.

associates Siddha Nāgārjuna, who met Vyāli to learn the secret of the immortality, by offering his magical shoe to the Vyāli. Then he returned to the Śrīparvata and continued his practice for the sake of all beings. Soon after Vyāli returned to the world, he becomes the disciple of Siddha Carpati, after encountering him. Based on the above legend, Vyāli would have lived in the 10th century, since he was associated with Siddha Nāgārjuna and Siddha Carpati⁹⁷.

The sculptural representation of Vyālinātha is not so numerous in south India. Generally, Vyālinātha is shown seated on the mythical animal *Vyāli*⁹⁸. His head is adorned with matted hair. The *kundalas* (ear rings) on his ears are clearly visible. He is wearing a bangle like ring in his hands. His right hand is rested on the back of his vehicle *Vyāli* and his left hand is put down towards the opened mouth of his vehicle. His left leg is folded and its foot is resting on the body of his vehicle and his right leg is hanging down towards the ground. The *Vyāli* is depicted as in striding position which denotes that it is in movement and its tail is erect. Sometimes, the *Vyāli* is depicted as in striding position and its trunk rising upward, which denotes that it is in movement and its tail is erected towards the sky. Its mouth is left opened like yawning.

On the pillar of *ardhamāṇḍapa* of Śrī Mūlanātha Swāmy temple, Bāhūr, Puduchērry Vyālinātha seated on *Vyāli*, a mythical animal is found. His hairdo resembles the typical Chālukyan style. He is seated with his right hand in *katya valambita mudrā* resting on the tail/back of the *Vyāli* and his left hand on its head. Necklace like ornament on chest, big *kundalas* on ears, rings on his wrists are clearly depicted. This *maṇḍapa* dates back to the 9th-10th centuries. In all other later examples, the *Vyāli* is facing towards his right handside, but in this, the *Vyāli* is facing towards his left hand side (Fig.60).

Another sculpture of *Vyālinātha* is found in the *mukhamāṇḍapa* pillar of the Sōmēśvara temple, Ulsūr, Karnāṭaka. In this he is depicted seated in *ardha-paryāṅkāśana* pose on a *Vyāli*. The *Vyāli* is facing to his right hand side and his right hand is probably placed on the *Vyāli*'s mouth/trunk. His left hand is resting on his left

⁹⁷ Abhaya Datta, et.al., *Op.cit.*, p. 382

⁹⁸ *Vyāli* is a mythical animal with a combination of tiger or lion body, and elephant trunk or the face of a crocodile.

leg knee. The general appendages of the Nāthas such as the *yōgapatta*, horn, and disheveled hair and so on are also found on him (Fig.61).

In the *mukhamāṇḍapa* pillar of the Bhōganandīśvara temple of Nandi, Karnāṭaka, Vyālinātha is shown seated on a striding *Vyāli* in an *ardha-matsyēndrāsana* pose. His left hand is folded and resting on the left leg knee, which is already folded upward and footed on *Vyāli*. His right hand is unfolded as he is showing his palm in a *hamsapakṣa mudrā*. His head is slightly bent towards left. His matted hair, big *kūṇḍalas*, deer horn as a medallion on his chest tied in a thick woollen like thread, rings in his arms and wrists are clearly depicted (Fig.62). Another sculpture of Vyālinātha is found on the wall of the Amman shrine (*Thāyār Saṇṇidhi*) of Śrī Raṅganātha temple at Śrīraṅgam which is almost similar to the one described above (Fig.63).

Two sculpture of Vyālinātha are found in two different parts of the *Gōpura* of Villianūr temple. The one on the southern wall of the southern *gōpura* show him with long matted locks of hair covering his ears. He is wearing a *laṅgōti* and cross belts on his chest. His right leg is hanging down and the left leg is folded upward and folded on the back of the *Vyāli*. He is holding a flag like attribute in his right hand and his left hand is resting on the left leg knee in a *lōla-hasta* pose. A wallet in his left arm is also visible (Fig.64).

The second one is found on the northern side of the southern *gōpura*, where the other sculptures of Navanāthas are also found in a single row from top to bottom. In this *Vyāli* is clearly depicted as it is fierce fully striding, by opening its mouth and showing its big teeth. He is seated on the *Vyāli* wearing *laṅgōti*, holding a fly whisk in his right hand and his left hand resting on the back of the *Vyāli* in a *katya valambita mudrā*. His matted hair, big ear rings, necklace like ornaments, medallion of deer horn, rings on his wrists, a wallet on his left shoulder are clearly depicted (Fig.65).

The sculptures of Vyālinātha are also found at Āvani, Ulsūr, Kalāsipālayam, etc. and other temples in Karnāṭaka, Śrīsailam in Āndhra Pradesh.

6. Kūrma Nātha (Nātha on a Tortoise)

According to Gordon White⁹⁹, Kūrmanātha is one of the four *yuganāthas*, the Lords of the Ages (Khagēndranātha, Kūrmanātha, Mēṣanātha and Macchēndranātha) of the *Siddha Cakra* of earlier *Kaula* tradition. And these four are identified with the four cardinal directions on the inner square of the important *Kaula Siddha Cakra*. In one of the pillars of the *Kalyāna maṇḍapa* of the Villianūr temple, Kūrmanātha is depicted seated on a tortoise. His head is adorned with matted hair and with the *kaṇḍaṇḍalas* (ear rings). He is wearing bangle like rings on his hands and a garland of beads across his chest. His left hand is holding the knee of the left leg and planted firmly on the tortoise and his right hand is rested on the thigh of his right leg with slight bend. Sculptures of this Kūrmanātha are also found in the temples at Ulsūr and Kalāsipālayam in Karnāṭaka. None of the literary works mention Kūrmanātha, nor is he found in the list of Navanāthas. Interestingly he appears in the list of Tamiḷ Siddars as *Kūrmamuṇi*¹⁰⁰. However, in the Tamiḷ tradition, he is not given any specific place or credited with any literary or medicinal work.

7. Nāga Nātha (Nātha on a Snake)

Interestingly, snakes are also associated with the legendary accounts of Gōrakṣanātha. He was called as the incarnation of *Ādisēṣa*, the primeval snake and the vehicle of Viṣṇu. He is also said to be proficient in snake taming and curing snake bites¹⁰¹. He is also said to have visited the Nāga kingdom. While describing about the divisions of the Order of the Nāthas, G.W. Briggs states that, Nāgnāth or Rāwal is the third of the original Śiva group. The *Rāwals* are the great wanderers, who are the most important of the *Musalmān yōgis*¹⁰². But Nāganātha is not included in the any of the list of Nātha order. Yet representations of a Nātha with all the characteristic appendages seated on the snake are depicted in the Navanātha sculptural panels of

⁹⁹ David Gordon White, *The Alchemical Body*, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1986 (rep.), pp. 180 and 444 (n)

¹⁰⁰ Kamil V. Zvelebil, *Lexicon of Tamil Literature*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1995, pp. 165-66.

¹⁰¹ See G.W. Briggs, *Op.cit.* 172-173.

¹⁰² Kama, a village nearer to Dwārahāt is the seat of the *pir* of the Almora district. The temple, which is in the house of the *pir*, is dedicated to Nāgnāth. Besides, the Devi Pātan temple that situated on a small hill close to the town of Tulsipur, in the Balrāmpur State, nearer to the foothills of Himalayas and the borders of Nepal. The north-east corner is a spot sacred to Nāgnāth. see G.W. Briggs, *Op.cit.*, 1938, 66, 81, and 93.

Kalāsipālayam and Ulsūr. Besides these he was also found in isolated context in many of the south Indian temples. Some of them are discussed below:

In the southern *gōpura* of Tirukāmēśvara temple, Villianūr, Puduchērry, the sculpture of Nāganātha is identified along with other Nāthas. He is seated on an elevated place and under his foot a snake is depicted with its raising hood. Almost all Nāthas who are placed in this row are shown with common appendages such as matted hair, big *kuṇḍalas*, necklace like ornaments, deer horn medallion, rings on his wrists, *laṅgōti* etc. A *yōga-daṇḍa* is placed on a tail of the snake, on which Nāganātha resting his left hand and his right hand in *daṇḍa-hasta mudrā* is resting on his folded right knee (Fig.67). One sculpture of Nāganātha is found in the *mukhamaṇḍapa* pillar of the Sōmēśvara temple at Ulsūr. He is seated in a *Pariaṅgāsana* pose on a folded snake which is raising its big hood. His folded left leg is resting on his right leg and his left hand is resting on the snake in a *katya valambita mudrā* and his right hand is on his left knee in a *lōla-hasta mudrā*. His *laṅgōti*, *kuṇḍala*, matted hair, a wallet on his left shoulder and cross bands on his chest are clearly visible (Fig.68). Another sculpture is identified on the entrance pillar of the Jalakaṇṭēśvara temple, Kalāsipālayam. Unlike other sculptures, in this, the nātha is holding the snake in his left hand in an *Upavēsāsana* (squatting position) instead of seated on it; and a wallet is hanging on his right hand. His matted hair, big *kuṇḍala*, thick woollen cross bands are purposefully shown. He is holding his right hand in *chinmudrā* (Fig.69). Similarly with few changes in its style, same kinds of sculptures are also found in the temples at Śrisailam, Nandi, Ulsūr and Kalāsipālayam.

8. Varāha Nātha (Nātha on a Boar)

The name Varāhanātha is not included in any of the lists of Nātha Siddha. However, at Kalāsipālayam and Ulsūr temples the Varāhanātha is one of the Navanāthas. Besides these two temples, Varāhanātha is depicted in some more temple sculptures. Except in a couple of cases in which he is shown seated on the boar, all other examples are in standing posture particularly in *yōgic* posture.

In the sculpture identified on the *mukhamaṇḍapa* pillar of the Bhōganandīśvara temple at Karnātaka, he is seated in a *lalitāsana* on a boar, similar to the Vyālinātha (Fig.62) found in the same temple. His right hand is in a *hamsapakṣa*

mudrā and his left hand is in *daṇḍa-hasta mudrā*. A long cross band is shown on his left shoulder, a big medallion on his neck, *kuṇḍalas* on his ears, rings on his wrists and arms, and anklets on his legs are clearly depicted and his knotted hairdo is different from all other hair styles (Fig.70). In another example of Varāhanātha from the same temple he is shown in a standing posture. In this sculpture Nātha is standing in a *Vrkśāsana* pose, by holding right toe on the earth and his folded left leg is resting on the right thigh. His both hands are raised above his head in *añjali mudrā*. He is having a long beard and long flowing locks of hair. A boar is depicted standing behind him (Fig.71). In this and all other sculptures in Tamil region, Varāhanātha is depicted in *Vrkśāsana* pose and boar is depicted standing behind him (Figs. 71-82).

9. Nātha on a Lion

One of the *Nava Nāthas* is found seated on a striding lion. His head is adorned with matted hair. He is wearing the *kuṇḍalas* (ear ring) on his ears; bangle like rings on his hands and a garland of beads (*rudrākshas*) that crossed around his chest. His left hand is rested on the knee of the left leg that rested and slightly rises upwards from the back of the lion and his right hand is rested on the thighs of his right leg with slight bend. The lion is depicted as in striding position which denotes that it is in movement and its tail is erected towards the sky. The name and legendary history of this Nātha on a lion is still obscure and so far there are no textual descriptions of any Nātha who can be identified as something to do with a lion. The image of this Nātha on a lion is rarely found in the temple sculptures except, Villianūr, Nandi, Ulsūr, Kalāsipālayam, Hampi and Śrisailam (Figs. 13, 16).

Depictions of the Siddhas in different *Yōgic* Postures

Besides the representations of the Nātha Siddhas in the Vijayanagara art, in the same context we have the occurrence of many low-relief sculptures which can be identified as those of *yōgic* exercises. They also occur in almost all the temples of south India. Unlike the Nātha Siddha representations, which display stylistic uniformity across the region, the representations of the yogic exercises display great thematic and stylistic divergence. As the Nātha Siddha philosophy also emphasise on *jīvanmukti* through the achievement of a *siddhadēha* with the help of *yōga*, a study of

these sculptural representations will help us in understanding the evolution of the sculptural manifestations.

Attainment of supernatural powers (*Siddhi/ṛddhi*) has been one of the goals of ancient Indian thinking that found expression in all the religious systems in their philosophy, literature and material/ritual context. Tradition speaks about Eight (*Aṣṭa*) *Siddhis*¹⁰³, which are to be attained through *Yōga Sādhana* and the individual who attained them is called a *Siddhā* or *Siddhāchārya*. The *Tāntric Yōga* is to be decided by the *Ācharya* (*Guru*) depending on the receptibility and nature of the disciple¹⁰⁴.

Tāntric Yōga does not go against nature and on the contrary it follows the law of nature, which is by itself inclined to move towards self-realisation. The *Sādhaka* should have a positive attitude towards two things in life: 1) it means accepting worldly desires and objects of enjoyment (*Bhōga*) and treating them in such a way as to move towards sublimation, and 2) it means accepting that every thing in the world is divine. As such we are not supposed to kill our desires but to learn to transform or sublimate them. This is the reason why *Tantra* advocates the *Sādhana* of *kaula* or *Vāma mārga*¹⁰⁵. The basic desires (sex desires) are accepted in the *Tāntric Sādhana* as currents of energy originating from one and the same basic source, *cit sakti* or *kuṇḍalini*. These vital and *pranic* currents are to be controlled and regulated so as to see their smooth flow through sublime channels and yield better results. *Siddhas* believe that the human body is the microcosm of the universe – mountain, sea, Moon, Sun and river – all that, which the world is composed of, are within the human body.

¹⁰³ *Siddhi*, attainable through *Sādhana*, may be of many kinds, e.g., *mantrasiddhi* (Success in *mantras*), *vāksiddhi* (success in speech). By the former, *mantra* is made of secure the desired result. By the latter, the speech becomes infallible. After reaching the peak of spiritual life, one can possess the eight *Siddhis*, viz., *anima* (power of assuming and atomic Figure), *mahima* (power of increasing one's size at will); *laghima* (assuming excessive lightness at will), *isitva* (acquiring superiority over others), *vaistva* (subduing all to one's will), *prapti* (obtaining anything at will), *prakāmya* (irresistible will), *kāmavasayita* (suppression of passion and desire).

¹⁰⁴ *Tantras* classified the human beings on the basis of the mental qualities into three groups. 1. *Divyabhava*, 2. *Vīrabhava* and 3. *Paśubhava*. Accordingly separate *Tāntric* methods are prescribed by the teacher to each of these categories. The *Vāmācāra tantras* which prescribed the usage of *Pañcatattvas* allowed only the *Vīrabhava* class to adopt them. For the *Paśubhava*, the mantras are prescribed and for the *Divyabhavas* the *mudrās*. Similarly, recitation of *mantras* inwardly and outwardly is also ordained.

¹⁰⁵ The extreme form of the *tantras* are called as *Vāma tantra* or *Kaula tantras* which emphasis the enjoinderment of all worldly pleasures including sex which is also given the status of *yōgic Sādhana*. For this purpose, the physical body is to be kept strong and virile for the purpose of which certain mercurial drugs are prescribed. For the *Kaula sādhaka* mercury is Śiva *Bīja* as the human semen, which is to be preserved for making the body ageless. In Buddhism, the same is called *Vajra*.

It is through *yōgic* practices that one should strive and achieve total control over the senses of the body and mind. For that a physically strong body is a must and for *Kāya-sādhana*¹⁰⁶. Besides *yōgic* practices, the *Siddhas* also insist on using mercurial drugs for making the body strong and indestructible which is called the *Rasavada* and such *Siddhas* are called *Rasēśvara Siddhas* or *Rasēśvaras*¹⁰⁷.

The *Siddhas* are the followers of the *yōgic* path of living to attain the ‘*Aṣṭa Siddhis*’. The *yōgic* practices through which the *Kuṇḍalini Śakti* is to be aroused and moved upwards to reach the *Sahasrāra* is the ultimate goal of the *yōgic* exercises. The continuity of the *prakṛiti* with *puruṣa* makes the *sādhaka* and ‘*paramahamsa*’ which is what the ultimate aim of a *tāntric* practitioner. The ascent of the *Kuṇḍalini śakti* through various *cakras* or *padmas* in various parts of the body is to be achieved in the ‘*Siddha Sādhana*’.

The Sculptural Representations

The sculptural art of Śrisailam temple in Āndhra Pradesh is replete with the representations of the *Aṣṭadala padma*, *Dasadala padma*, *dwadasadala padma* and so on denoting different nerve-plexuses within the body such as *Mūlādhara*, *Svadhīstāna*, *Maṇipura*, *Anāhata*, *Viśuddha*, and *Ājñā*; each of them is visualized as a *cakra* or *padma* with several angles or petals. As many as 150 representations of the *yōgic cakras* are found at Śrisailam. Some of them are depicted in association with *Siddhas* and sometimes with Swan (*Hamsa*). In addition to these several sculptures depict *yōgic* exercises and postures. All these indicate the popularity of *Siddha* cult in the sacred complex of Śrisailam. The symbolic representation of the ‘*Hamsa*’ beside the *Siddhas* in *yōgic* postures indicates their status as that of a *paramahamsa*. Śrisailam has important association with the traditions common to Śaivite and

¹⁰⁶ The fundamental difference between Brahminical ideology and *Tāntric* practice is that while the former prescribes severe physical suffering for the attainment of *mokṣa*, the latter recommends the stage of *jīvan mukta* in one’s own life span through the knowledge of the unity of the male - female elements which is the ultimate *siddhi* of the body (*Kāya*) within and without.

¹⁰⁷ One aspect of the *Nātha Siddha* cult is the usage of mercurial drugs for making the body ageless and also for the manufacture of gold from the base metals. One of the *Nātha Siddhas*, the *Siddha* Nāgārjuna and his disciple Atreya is stated to have established a chemical laboratory at Srisailam and made efforts to change the entire hill Sripāravata into gold. Besides Śrisailam, Ālampuram, Siddhavatam and Tripurāntakam are said to be the centers of *Rasavidya* during medieval times. The Tamiḷ *siddhas* are also referred to as experts in alchemy and all these are called as *Rasasiddhas* or *Rasēśvaras*. (P.V.P. Sastry, 2005, pp. 30-35; P. Hymavathy, 2006 & 2008; N.N. Bhattacharayya, 1992, pp.22-24).

Buddhist *tantra*. On the Buddhist side, Śrisailam appears to be the Śripārvata mentioned in many Tibetan texts, where the Siddha Nāgārjuna did alchemical experiments.

One of the examples of *yōgic* exercises is found on the *prakāra* wall of Śrisailam temple. A Siddha is seated on a long *yōga-daṇḍa* in a *padmāsana* pose and his head and body are fully bent towards his right side. His both hands are raised and joined together in *añjali mudrā*. His matted hair and big *kuṇḍala*, are clearly visible. Besides, a tree and under him, two monkeys are shown to depict the forest scenery (Fig.91). Similar representations are also found in association with the Nātha Siddha representations (Fig.23).

According to the ancient tradition, ascetics who strive to gain liberation are classified into four classes. They are *kutīcakas*, *bahūdakas*, *hamsas* and *paramahamsas*. Of these, the last represents an extremely ancient ascetic order. The *paramahamsas* live under trees, in grave yards or in deserted houses. They go naked or half-clad. They are indifferent to everything in the sense that they are disinterested, free souls. They look at a clod of mud and gold with the same dispassion. They accept food from people of any caste. They practice a kind of *yōgic tāntrism*. Gōrakṣanātha is described as *Paramahamsa*¹⁰⁸. The Siddhas of Tamiḷnāḍu come very close to the *Paramahamsas*¹⁰⁹.

On a pillar near the Bhairavanātha in the Tiruvēṅgalanātha Temple at Hampi is a fine image of a, long-haired *yōgin* standing in *vrikśāsana*, the tree posture. This posture is also seen once at Śrīngēri also. On the south wall of the Śrīngēri temple, an *yōgin* is depicted with hair tied in a bow-shaped knot, in *vrikśāsana*, stands beside a stylized tree, on the other side of which is a long-haired Siddha watching him. The east wall has a female *yōgini*-Siddha, standing in *vrikśāsana*, with stylized trees on each side of her to echo her tree posture. Further along this wall is an *yōgin* performing this *āsana* as part of *pañcagnitapasya*, the five-fire-austerity. Similar representations of *vrikśāsana* are found in many styles and forms in the sculptures of Tañjāvūr (Fig.115), Tiruvotriyūr (Figs.116) and Villianūr (Fig.117).

¹⁰⁸ G.W.Briggs, *Op.cit*, p.200.

¹⁰⁹ T.N. Ganapathy, *philosophy*, p.17

However, in the Vidyāśaṅkara temple at Śringeri, there are eight images of *yōgins* engaged in exceedingly complex and difficult *āsanas*. Five of these are of *kukkuṭāsana* and variations. *Kukkuta* means a cock, on which the posture is based. In the standard *kukkuṭāsana*, the *yōgin* sits in *padmāsana*, the lotus posture, inserts the hands between the thighs and calls and lifts the body off the ground, supported on the hands. The *Kubjikamata*, an early *Tāntric* work on *yōga* of about the tenth century, includes *kukkuṭāsana* as effective in facilitating the release of the *Kuṇḍalini*, the vital cosmic energy, conceived as a coiled serpent at the base of the spine. Beside the north *gōpura*, on the *prakāra* at Śrisailam, is a panel showing two *yōgins* in the forest. One is in a variation of *kukkuṭāsana* combined with a variation of *baddhakōṇāsana*, the cobbler's sitting pose, and the other is in a difficult sitting posture¹¹⁰.

The more interesting thing in Bāhūr temple is, the principal deity of the temple itself having the suffix 'nātha' in his name as Mūlanātha. Apart from these, many other different *yōgic* practices are also depicted in the pillars of the *maṇḍapa* such as a *yōgi* is depicted in a seated posture and his knees were tied with *yōgapatṭa* with crossed legs that rested on the ground (Fig.100). They are having a long beard and their hairs are matted, eyes are closed denoting their deep meditation, their hands rest down on knees. He is wearing bangle like rings on his arms and wrist. Some of them wearing garland of beads (*rudrākṣamāla*) in their necks, holding *yōgadaṇḍa* and *kamaṇḍalu* in their hands. Some of the ascetics are depicted in *añjali mudra*, and in *Dwi Pāda Sīrsāsana*¹¹¹, some of them are naked as their secret parts are visible, one of them carrying a *liṅgā* in one hand and hold his male organ in other hand and so on. In one of the sculptures, a *yōgi* is depicted as he is meditating in a tremendous way as his head rest at ground and his legs folded upwards (*Ūrdhva Padmāsana* in *Sīrsāsana*)¹¹². In many of the sculptures, above to the head of the *yōgic* practitioners or Siddhas an *aṣṭadala padmā* is engraved¹¹³ (Fig.130). Some of the unique representations of *Yōgic* exercises from several temples in the study area are discussed below.

¹¹⁰ Richard Shaw, *Op.cit*, p. 244

¹¹¹ For more *yōgic āsanās* See B. K. S. Iyengar, *op.cit.*, p. 307-308

¹¹² See B. K. S. Iyengar, *op.cit.*, p. 203-204

¹¹³ The eight petalled lotus (*aṣṭadala padma*) is used as universal *tāntric* symbol. The petals are said to be *Ka, Ca, Ta, Pa, Ya, Sa, and La*, which is known as *guptarayogini*, the attainment is known as *mahimasiddhi*. See N. N. Bhattacharyya, *op.cit.*, p. 410.

Representations of the *yōgic* exercises involving the use of *yōgadaṇḍa* are found in many temples such as Nandibeta in Karnāṭaka (Fig.96); Narasimha temple at Lower and Upper Ahobilam in Āndhra Pradesh (Figs.103,105), Marakāṇam in Tamiḷnāḍu (Fig.106), which indicate the strenuous exercises that require sitting in the same posture over long periods.

On the contrary, the sculptural examples of Tiruvattāru in Tamiḷnāḍu show some interesting schematic representations of the *Yōgic cakras* in the human body. These sculptures also carry a sexual dimension of the *Yōgic* powers, in the portrayal of ithyphallic men (Figs.134-138; 140-143). Similar examples are also found in the temples of Bāhūr, Puduchērry (Fig.144); Sriraṅgam (Fig.145); Tirupathisāram, Tamiḷnāḍu (Fig.146) and Āraṇmula, Kēraḷā (Fig.147).

There are some sculptures which show a variety of *Yogāsana* postures of the *Nāthapanthis* such as *ardha-padmāsana* (Fig.92,93) together with *hamsapakṣa mudrā* (Fig.94) *katya valambita mudrā* (Fig.95), *lōla-hasta mudrā*, *kaṅgula (dhyāni) mudrā* (Fig.97), *Vrkśāsana* with *dhyāni/kaṅgula mudrā* (Fig.99), *ardha-padmāsana* with *katya valambita mudrā* (Fig.104,107), *lalitāsana* with *abhaya mudrā* (Fig.110) *Vrkśāsana* with *abhaya mudrā* (Fig.111), *padmāsana* with *aṅjali mudrā* (Fig.112), *ardha-padmāsana* with *lōla-hasta* and *abhaya-mudrā* (Fig.113), *paryaṅkāsana* with *daṇḍa-hasta mudra* (Fig.118), *Sastikāsana* with *daṇḍa-hasta mudrā* (Fig.119), *pārśvottānāsana* with *Gaṇēśa mudrā* (Fig.122), *Dwi-pāda Sirasāsana* with *aṅjali mudrā* (Fig.129), *ūrdhva padmāsana* in *Sirisāna* together with *Gaṇēśa mudrā* (Fig.131).

These *yōgic* exercises performed by the *Nāthapanthis*, *Siddhas* and female *Siddhas* indicate the popularity of the *Siddha* philosophy in the medieval society, cutting across the geographical, vernacular and gender specificities. They can also be considered as visual aids which were used to teach the initiates about the intricacies of the exercises.

Cakra Pūjā or Bhairavi Cakra

The worship of Śakti is centered chiefly in mystic circle known as *Bhairavi Cakra*. It is otherwise called *Cakrapūjā*, in which there was free and unrestricted use

of liquor, meat and woman. In Rajasekhara's play *Karpūramañjari*, Bhairavānanda the master magician declares that he is an adherent of the *Kaula* way, drinks with and enjoys women and so goes forward to salvation. He describes the *Kaula* religion as charming to all, its only requirements are a hot strumpet for wife, plenty of meat and wine, alms and a pelt to serve as bed; and opines that while gods like Hari and Brahma prescribe meditation, the study of the Vedas, and sacrifices as leading to final release, Śiva has the sole credit of having devised a way to salvation consistent with the pleasures of love and wine. The Kaulācāryās did not observe any restrictions regarding food, drink and caste. In the *Bhairavi Cakra* where *Kaulas* gather to worship Śakti, all castes were admitted, meat of every sort excepting perhaps beef was allowed, and every worshipper was required to contract a marriage which was to last to the end of the gathering. In the literature of medieval Āndhra, we come across terms like *Bhairavaitantra*, *Bhairavayōgini* and *Yōginicakra*¹¹⁴.

Cakrapūjā or the circle of worshippers comprises of alternating male and female, with an emphasis upon ritual nudity prominent in both groups. The circle resembles the womb or feminine symbol, which is to enclose and entrap the psychic or *pranic* energies exuded by the naked, living flesh of the participants. As their sexual-emotional excitement increases, more radiation is produced for occult use. This energy forms a "cone of power" over the group and is similar to the whirling vortex of psychic force released during copulation¹¹⁵. In this ritual one or more male *Tāntric* practitioners surrounds himself or themselves with female *Tāntrics*, most probably '8, 16 or 64' are recommended numbers. But only a few people are fit to use this Five 'M's. Of the three types of human beings, viz., *paśu*, *vīrā* and *divyā*, only the 'vīrā' type is allowed to use the *pañca-makāras* or '*kaula dravyās*' in the *Tāntric* rituals¹¹⁶. The woman with whom sexual intercourse is to be had is called Śakti or *Prakṛti* or *Lata* and this special ritual is called *Latasādhana*. According to *Kaulavalinirnaya*, sexual intercourse is the only means by which the aspirant can

¹¹⁴ B.S.L. Hanumantha Rao, *Religion in Andhra: A Survey of Religious Developments in Andhra from early times up to A.D. 1325*, Archeological Series No.69, Department of Archeology and Museums, Government of Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad, 1993, p. 292

¹¹⁵ Jonn Mumford, *Ecstasy of Tantra*, Llewellyn Publications, USA., 10th rep., 2003, p. 107

¹¹⁶ The *Tantras* speak of three temperaments, dispositions, characters (*bhava*), or classes of men, namely, the *pashu-bhava* (animal), *vira-bhava* (heroic), and *divya-bhava* (*deva*-like or divine). These divisions are based on various modifications of the *guna* as they manifest in man (*jiva*); see Arthur Avalon (Sir John Woodroffe) (Trans), *Mahanirvana Tantra - Tantra of the Great Liberation*, p. 25.

become a Siddha. Every woman is fit for intercourse, except the wife of the *Guru* or of one who has attained the status of *vīrā*. This *Cakrapūjā* is also known as *yōṇipūjā*, mostly performed by the *Kāyasiddhas*¹¹⁷, who belongs to the *Vāmācāra* group¹¹⁸. The Kāpālikā sect is the best known *Tāntrika* sect which freely indulged in the usage of the *pañcamakāra*. The sexual depictions which appear in large number in both Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava temples speak volumes about the popularity of the sexual rituals during the medieval times.

In the spiritual *Pañcamakāra*, *Māmsa* is the tongue, and eat meat by preserving silence. *Matśya* is the breath, and eating fish means holding the breath via *prāṇāyāma*. *Mudrā* or eating grain is the holding of the body in a certain posture to encourage free movement of *Kuṇḍalini* within it. *Madira* is the wine of Amrita which drops from the glands within the head into the body, and *Maithuna* is the union of the (*Kuṇḍalini*) *Śakti* with Śiva in the *Sahasrarā*. However in the present situation, in one form or another, instead of using the above said Five ‘*M*’s, still millions of people performing the *Pūjā* with five elements in a very simplest way.

This simplest *Pūjā* involves offering to God flowers to represent the Ether elements, incense for the Air element, a lamp for fire, food for water, and sandalwood paste or another fragrant unguent, for Earth¹¹⁹. Thus these flowers, incense, lamp, food and sandal paste are considered as the representatives of the five elements as well as the substitutes of the *Pañcamakāra*. Similarly, the impact and imprints of this *tāntric* cult and practices are still retained in the society in different other forms. For instance, the Five ‘*M*’s are now replaced with the *Pañcagāvya* in the temple rituals of the present day. The *Pañcagāvya* consists of five products of cow such as milk, curd,

¹¹⁷ See R. Venkataraman, *op.cit.* pp. 94-96; he classifies the Tamiḷ Siddhas into Sanmārgasiddhas, Nāṇasiddhas and Kāyasiddhas. Further he also gives more descriptions on performing of *Vāmipūjā* (*yōṇipūjā*) as described by Siddha Rōmaṛiṣi.

¹¹⁸ The Siddhas are classified into two broad categories such as *Dakṣiṇa* (right hand) and *Vāmā* (left hand). It is generally held that those who participate in the rituals of five ‘*M*’s belong to the category of *Vāmācāra*. According to a different tradition everyone is a follower of *Dakṣiṇācāra* by birth. It is only by initiation that one becomes a *Vāmācāri*. The followers of *Dakṣiṇācāra* worship the great goddess in the traditional way. They believe in *varṇāśrama* and in the existing *Brahmanical* methods. See N. N. Bhattacharyya, *op.cit.*, pp. 401, 421.

¹¹⁹ Robert E. Svoboda, *Aghora II: Kuṇḍalini*, Rupa and Co., New Delhi, (23rd rep.), 2011, pp. 95-97

ghee/butter, urine and dung, were all of great purifying potency, especially when combined in a single mixture¹²⁰.

According to a description of it found in the *Kaulavalinirñaya*, an equal number of men and women, without distinction of caste and even of blood-relation secretly meet at night and sit in a circle. The goddess is represented by a *yantra* or diagram. The woman cast their bodices in a receptacle and each of the assembled men finds a female companion for that night by taking a bodice out to those contained in the receptacle¹²¹. This *Bhairavi Cakra* is scrupulously kept secret in all the *Tantras*¹²². In *Bhairavi Cakra* there is no distinction of caste, and there is no restriction about one eating the remnants of others' meals. The worshippers joining the *cakras* are considered as part and parcel of the Great Mother Goddess. The significance of these *cakras* is that the female agents referred to, should be worshipped as the Mother Goddess by the devotee, by remaining unaffected with passions and temptations. The meat of birds or beasts represents the sacrifice of attachment and animalistic¹²³. Because of the above rituals, it is commonly said that the siddhas are believed in *bhōgamārga* and seem to have performed group sex, to attain immortality.

In the sculptural representations, generally the *Tāntric* practitioner is shown standing in *añjali mudrā* whose hands are raised above the head. His legs are just bent towards the right side. He is shown ithyphallic or with a virile membrane. The practitioner shown with an ithyphallic pose is an illustration of the ascent of *kuṇḍalini* (semen), leading to the *sahasrāra* or union with godhood. Usually a group of practitioners are depicted along with a depiction of a nude woman who represents the *Bhairavi* or female *śakti*. Here, the female called a *Bhairavi* in the sexual rites is shown standing before the practitioner as nude with legs wide apart or displaying her secret parts. Surrounding her on either side are three or more male *tāntric* practitioners similarly nude with virile membranes in *añjali mudrā*. In many of the

¹²⁰ According to a legend, the cow *Surabhi*, the mother of all cows, was one of the treasures churned from the cosmic ocean. Therefore cow and its products are considered as divine and healthy respectively. However, there is no any cow-goddess and also no temples are there in their honour. See A.L. Basham, *The Wonder that was India*, Sidgwick and Jackson, London, 1967, p. 321

¹²¹ N. N. Bhattacharyya, *op.cit.*, pp. 121-122

¹²² for more information about this practice see Pranab Bandyopadhyay, *op.cit.*, pp. 135-36; and also, G. W. Briggs, *Op.cit.*, 1938, pp. 172-73

¹²³ Pranab Bandyopadhyay, *op.cit.*, p. 136

representations, the male *tāntric* practitioners are shown inferior to the *Bhairavi* and that is portrayed in the reduction of the size of the male members in comparison to the *Bhairavi*. In some cases the male members are shown in a low profile at the feet of the *Bhairavi*. In the solitary example found in a small frieze at Śrisailam, the nude *Bhairavi* is shown seated in a squatting posture (*Upavēśāsana*) with her legs wide apart on either side of whom three ithyphallic male practitioners are shown in *Añjali mudrā* (Fig.148). Except this all other sculptural examples of *Bhairavi Cakra* are in standing posture. In another representation of *Bhairavi Cakra* at Paṇḍacōlanallur, Puduchērry, the nude *Bhairavi* is shown standing in a *varada mudrā* and other practitioners in *añjali mudrā*, and one of them is kneeling down to her feet (Fig.149). All the remaining examples of *Bhairavi cakra* in the study area both in stone and stucco media, show the Female in sensuous postures, semi-nude, showing her secret parts in sexual orgy at the feet of whom are the male practitioners, nude and erect, in *Añjalimudrā*, in sexual excitement advancing towards the *Bhairavi* (See Figs 150-160).

Though being a Vaiṣṇavite temple, hundreds of sculptures relating to the *Bhairavi cakra* are found in the pillared halls of Āthikēśava Perumal temple at Tiruvattāru in Kānniyā kumari District. In the *āsthāna-maṇḍapa* of Tiruparaṅkunram, interesting sculptures illustrating such kinds of rituals are depicted. Similar type of sculptures depicted with a group of *Tāntric* practitioners of *Bhairava Cakra* are frequently found in almost all Śiva temples of south India. In Tirukāmēśvara Temple of Villianūr, Puduchērry, more than twenty such panels representing the *Bhairavi Cakra* is depicted and an inscription without the depiction of *Bhairavi* or the female performer is also found in one of the pillars of Bāhūr Sri Mūlanātha Swāmy temple.

In the *vimānā* of the Pañcanadīśvara temple at Tiruvandarkoil, a group of stucco sculptures are found in the north-west corner, depicting the ritual of *Bhairavi cakra* (Fig.159). Similar stucco representations of the *Bhairavi cakra* is also found in the *Gōpura* of Tirukkaṇṇamaṅgai Temple of Tamilnādu, where the *Bhairavi* is surrounded by three men in *Añjalimudrā* and wearing loincloths. Similarly the *Bhairavi* is also covering her secret parts partly with a saree (Fig.161).

Further, depictions of *Bhairavicaakra* is also found in various Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava temples of Tamiḷnādu such as Sri Raṅganātha Swāmy temple at Śrīraṅgam (Fig.151) and Ucchi Pillaiyar Temple in Trichy, Chidambaram Nataraja Temple, Viruthagirīśvara temple Virudhāchalam, and also various other important famous medieval temples of Tirunelvēli, Kaṇṇiyākumari, Coimbatore, Dindigul, Villupuram districts of Tamiḷnādu. The depiction of *Bhairavicaakra* worship is also found on Naraśimha temple at Lower Ahobilam, Śiva temple at Mahānandi etc. in Āndhra Pradesh. In Karnāṭaka, in most of the Śaivite temples one can find the sculptures representing the *Bhairavi Cakra*, for instance, Somēśvara Temple at Ulsūr, Yōga-Nandīśvara temple at Nandi, Śiva temple at Āvani, Bhairava temple at Naṅjungudu etc. In Kēraḷā also comparable depictions are found in many temples of medieval period. More sculptures of *Bhairavicaakra* are found in the pillars and in the pillared halls of Āraṇmula, Tiruvaṇanthapuram, Tirumūlikalam, Tirukātkarai, Tirunāvai, Tiruvaṇṇādūr, Tirukadithānam, etc. Interestingly all of these temples are at present celebrated Vaiṣṇavite centres in Kēraḷā. In the same way, in other parts of south India, these sculpture occupy an important position and found frequently in almost all the temples that constructed during the Vijayanagara-Nāyaka periods and afterwards.

Images showing the making of *Siṅhanāda*

One of the interesting aspects found in the temple sculptures in relation to the Siddha tradition is producing of *Siṅhanāda* or roar of a lion. References were also found in the songs of the Tamiḷ Siddha Śivavākkiyar.

*aṅgaliṅga pītamāi ayiraṇḍu eḷuthilum
poṅgu thāmarayiṇum porunthu vārakathinūm
paṅgukoṇḍa sōthiyum parantha aṇḇe ḷuthumē
Siṅginātha ōsaiyum Śivāyam allathu illaiyē*¹²⁴.

The literal meaning of this song is, one who wears the *liṅga* in his body, who thinks the god in his thought, often recites the word *Namaśivāya*, and producing the sound of the *siṅginātha* are all none without *Śivāyam* (or Śiva). Further references on *Siṅginātham* are also found in one of the Telugu literary piece *Kavi Karna Rasāyanam* by Sanguchala Nirishma Kavi. The word *Siṅginātham* is derived from the

¹²⁴ Śivavākkiyar Pātakaḷ – 165, see Tha. Kovendhan, *Siddhar Pātakaḷ*, *Op.cit.*, p. 33.

word *Siṅgha* means Lion and *nātham* usually means sound¹²⁵. Through the horns of the deer, the Siddhas used to make a sound which is similar to the roar of lion (*Siṅghanāda*). However, sometimes these depictions of deer horns are misinterpreted as ‘*Chillums*’¹²⁶ which are used to smoke *gañja* (a dried leaf which will have an intoxicating effect when its smoke is inhaled). The *Nava Nātha Caritra* of Gaurana¹²⁷ mentions that Mīṇanātha was adorned with the deer’s horn, which indicates the usage of the deer horn by the Nāthas. The Kālamukas of the 11th-12th century were adorned with these deer horns and one of their sectarian meetings is actually called ‘*Simhapariśad*’¹²⁸ (Assembly of Lions). In some of the sculptures at Villianūr, Bāhūr, Trichy, Tiruparaṅkunṇam, Śrīraṅgam temples and also in the temple sculptures of Karnāṭaka and Āṇḍhra regions such kinds of ascetics are clearly depicted like producing *Siṅghanāda* using the horn of deer, and a *kuṇḍala* is also very clearly depicted in their ears. More over all the Navanāthas are characteristically shown wearing the deer horn in their necks as a medallion. It shows the amalgamation of the ritual paraphernalia between the Kāpālikas, Kālamukhas and Nātha-Siddhas (Figs.23, 83-90).

Representations of Kuṇḍalini Yōga

Kuṇḍalini is the energy in the form of a coiled serpent remaining latent in the *mūlādhārā*. As the source of all energy *Kuṇḍalini* reveals itself when roused by *yōgic* exercise. This ancient belief is at the root of the concept of *Kāyasādhana*, so much emphasised in the *Śākta* and the Buddhist *Tantras*. Some of the Tamiḷ Siddhas call a Siddha as one who worships the *Kuṇḍalini śakti* called *Vālai* in Tamiḷ. A Siddha is one who enjoys the fruits of *yōga*, i.e., liberation, by rousing the *Kuṇḍalini*¹²⁹. According to the *Śākta* scheme there are six nerve-plexes or wheels (*satcakras*) within

¹²⁵ Mocharla Ramakrishna Kavi (ed.), *Kavi Karna Rasayanam of Sanguchala Nirishma Kavi*, Andhra Pradesh Sahitya Academy, Hyderabad, 1967, pp. 2, 67.

¹²⁶ Chillum is a pipe used to smoke marijuana or hashish mixed with tobacco. It is three or four inches long and is straight, tapering from a wide bowl to a thin mouth.

¹²⁷ Gaurana’s *Nava Nātha Caritra*, (*Dvipada Kāvya* in Telugu), Ed. T. Koteswara Rao, Hyderabad, A.P. Sahitya Academy, 1984, p.35; the *prakāra* walls sculptures of Srisailam depict the gifting of such deer horns to the Nāthas by the devotees. See Chandramouli, N., *Tantric Symbols in the Art of Srisailam*, paper presented in National Seminar on Tantrism, Osmania University, Hyderabad, 2002.

¹²⁸ For more details about the Kālamukhās, see David Lorenzen, *Kapalikas and Kalamukhas (Two lost Saivite Sects)*, Delhi, 1972.

¹²⁹ T.N. Ganapathy, *The Philosophy of the Tamil Siddhas*, ICPR, New Delhi, 2004, p.20

the human body¹³⁰ and these are in the *mūlādhārā* (rectal region, at the base of the spine), *svadhisthānā* (immediately above the sexual organs), *maṇipūrāka* (the region of the navel), *anāhata* (region around the heart), *viśuddha* (at the front of the throat), and *ājna*¹³¹ (between the eyebrows). The highest cerebral region is known as *sahasrāra*¹³². Through *yōgic* exercise this *Kuṇḍalini śakti* has to be pushed up through the two main nerves, *iḍa* and *piṅgala*, so that it may reach the *sahasrara* or the highest cerebral region where it should meet its source¹³³. Then the nectar which reached the *sahasrara* is consumed by the *yōgic* practitioner forms the final stage of this *Kuṇḍalini yōga*. To consume the nectar the practitioner have to turn his tongue back above the palate in order to drink the nectar of immortality dripping from the thousand petalled lotus at the crown (*sahasrāra*). The the practice of turning the tongue back above the palate is known as the *khēcarī-mudrā* in *haṭha yōga*¹³⁴.

In the Ādikēśava Perumal temple at Tiruvattāru in Kāṇṇiyākumari district of Tamiḷnādu, there are several interesting sculptures showing the *Kuṇḍalini* aspects. In one of the sculptures, a *yōgic* practitioner is shown with a snake beside him as climbing up. It denotes that the *yōgi*'s practice of *Kuṇḍalini yōga* is in a progressive stage. Above his head a four petalled lotus is depicted which is denoting that he is in initial stage of practising *Kuṇḍalini* from *mūlādhāra* (in the symbolic form of four petalled lotus) (Fig.133). In another sculpture, a *yōgi* is standing in

¹³⁰ Except *sahasrara*, the other six are called *cakras* (circles) and these seven are represented with lotuses which having 4, 6, 10, 12, 16, 2 to 1000 petals from *Mūlādhāra* to *Sahasrara* respectively. Each lotus was assigned a colour, a *bija* mantra and a presiding deity with his consort. See N. N. Bhattacharyya, *Op.cit.*, 1982, pp. 226-227; For more details about the *satcakras* see S.C. Banerji, *A Brief History of Tantra Literature*, Naya Prokash, Calcutta, 1988, p.14 ;and also see R. Venkataraman, *Op.cit.*, Appendix-17, p. 233.

¹³¹ *Ājna cakra* has two large petals, each divided into forty-eight smaller petals, giving ninety-six in all. See Omraam Mikhael Aivanhov, *Man's Subtle Bodies and Centres: the Aura, the Solar Plexus, the Cakras...*, Prosveta, France, 1997, p. 134

¹³² Generally 1000 petalled lotus, but it has 960 outer petals and a central corolla of twelve petals, which gives 972 petals in all. The twelve petals of the corolla are golden yellow and the outer ring of 960 petals is purple, and the two rings spin in opposite directions. See Omraam Mikhael Aivanhov, *op.cit.*, pp. 134-135

¹³³ In the *Kaula* sexual practice, the *Kuṇḍalini śakti* is visualised in the form of the release of the semen. The release of the semen is to be with held and the energy is to be send in reverse direction to the *sahasrāra padma* which is turned inwards. Through *yōga sādhana*, the semen has to be turned upwards and energy of the semen is to be retained in the *sahasrāra* which is the zenith of the union of the *puruṣa* and *prakṛiti*. This reverse process of the *Kuṇḍalini yōga* is the peculiarity of the *kaula* school.

¹³⁴ Gavin Flood, *Op.cit.*, 2006, p. 175

*Pārśvōṭṭānāsana*¹³⁵ is showing his right hand index finger pointed near his buttocks (probably where the *mūlādhāra cakra* is) and the left hand index finger showing his head (where the *sahasrāra* is) (Fig.134). In another sculpture the *yōgi* holding his male organ (penis) in his right hand and his left hand finger showing his head, which may indicate that his *Kuṇḍalini śakti* reached his *sahasrāra* from *mūlādhāra* (Fig.135). Apart from these more than hundreds of similar sculptures are found in the first inner *prakāra* of the Tiruvaṭṭāru temple with slight stylistic variations in the *yōgic* postures.

One interesting and rare representation of the *yōgic cakras* is found on the ceiling beam of the *Puthumaṇḍapa* of Tiruvotriyūr Śiva temple. In this, on the body of a standing human Figure the *sat-cakras* are depicted in the respective places of his body starting from *mūlādhāra* to *Sahasrāra*. To his left (*iḍa*) moon is depicted and to his right (*piṅgala*) Sun is depicted. Though it seems to be of a later period, this kind of sculpture is not found in any other temple (Fig.139).

Besides these sculptures, on some temple exteriors, like Villianūr, Siṅgarikudi, Tiruvaṇḍārkoil in Puducherry region and in the *maṇḍapa* pillars of Susindram, Madurai, Aḷagarkoil, Śrīvillipūtūr, Paḷaṇi, Trichy, Śrīraṅgam, Kāramadai, Kāñchipuram, Vēllore, Tirukaḷukunram in Pondicherry, one finds the representation of the ascetics. Interestingly one can find a series of such erotic sculptures engraved in the steps of pond at Chinṇaiyanpēṭṭai village of Cheṅgam *taluk* in Tiruvaṇṇāmalai. Thus, the erotic imagery was probably the result of incorporating *Tāntric* motifs into the architecture of the temple.

Representations of Tāntric deities in the Temple Gōpuras

The Vijayanagara rulers consciously promoted the *tāntric* symbolism in the sculptural art. In the *gōpuras* number of *Tāntric* images including the *Tāntric* rites, images of Nātha-Siddhas and other *Tāntric* deities including various forms of Śiva are sculpted in different styles and forms, either in stucco in the upper part of the *gōpura* or in the granite structure of the lower parts of the *gōpura*. The Nāthas/Siddhas

¹³⁵ *Pārśva* means side or flank. *Uttāna* (*ut*=intense, and *tān*=to extend, stretch, lengthen) means an intense stretch. The name implies a pose in which the side of the chest is stretched intensely. See B. K. S. Iyengar, *Light on Yoga*, Harper Collins Publishers, New Delhi, 1991, pp. 78-79

images in stucco sculpture found in the temples of Kumbakōṇam region. Most of these temples belong to the Cōla period. But the super structure of the temple *vimāna* and the entrance *gōpura* in stucco are the additions of the Vijayanagara-Nāyaka period and later. At the top of the southern side *maṇḍapa* of the Tiruvīlīmīlalai Vīlināthar temple, Kumbakōṇam, the images of Mīṇanātha and Gōrakṣanātha are found in an artistic manner, which is differ from other ordinary pillar relief sculptures. In Tañjāvūr, for a long period the *Tāntric* cult was popular as revealed by the sculptural representations found in *gōpura* and Nandi *maṇḍapa*¹³⁶ of the Brahādīśvara temple.

Images depicting the *Tāntric* rites and Siddhas are also found in the *gōpuras* of Vaḷḷīśvaram Śiva temple at Tuṛaiyūr near Sittannavāsai of Pudukōṭṭai district, at Tiruvotṭriyur near Chennai, Tirukaḷukunram, Tiruchendhūr Murugaṇ temple, Tiruchenkōdu Śiva temple and few other Śaivite temples in Nāmakkal and Erode districts, Jalakantēśvara temple at Vellore, Kāmāṭchi temple, Ēkāmbaranātha, Varadharāja Perumal temple at Kāñchipuram, Susindram Tānumālaya Perumal temple, Tiruvattāru Āthikēśava Perumal temple in Kaṇṇiyākumari District, Tiruppullāni Āthijaganātha Perumal temple in Rāmnād district, Ucchi Piḷḷaiyār temple at Trichy, Sri Raṅganātha Perumal at Śrīraṅgam, Soundararāja Perumal temple, Oppiliappar temple, Tirukadaiyūr Abirami temple of the Nāgapaṭṭiṇam district, Tarbārunēśvara temple at Kāraikāl, Natarāja temple at Chidambaram, Vaithiyanātha temple at Vaithīśvarankoil in Tamiḷnādu are all having different kinds of *Tāntric* sculptures, and most of them remain unnoticed.

Evolution of the *Tāntric* Sculptures

In the initial phases, the Nātha-Siddhas sculptures started occupying in very less numbers only in the pillar reliefs, then in the top of the entrance *gōpuras* of the temples in the subsequent periods. These Siddhas and Nāthas deserve the place of minor deities and have less importance comparing to the other semi-divine beings of the Hindu pantheon. As time passed these sculptures, appears repeatedly in the same temples all over south India. Particularly, during the Vijayanagara and Nāyakas times, these *Tāntric* sculptures gained more importance and occupied a major number of

¹³⁶ The Nandi *maṇḍapa* and the bull are the contribution of Tañjāvūr Nāyaks in 16-17th centuries. Kudavayil Balasubramaniam, *Tañjai Rājarārēśvaram*, Ajantha Pathippagam, Tañjāvūr, 2009, p. 38

pillars and *gōpuras*, on par with other demi-gods. The most popular images of Nātha-Siddhas are found in Vijayanagara sculpture. The only one identifiable among them is Matsyēndranātha, who seated on a fish. He also appears occasionally on temple door-jamb. For instance, at Hampi, one door-jamb has the relief of this sage on his fish, while the second has that of a *yōgi*, seated cross-legged on a *makara*, with his hands resting on a staff, his ears elongated with the weight of his circular earrings¹³⁷.

In the 16th century Vijayanagara artists had evolved their own style which, when disseminated throughout the empire, was to be further elaborated by the successors of the Vijayanagara imperial power. Sculptors of this period generally followed the traditional guidelines for the representation of the divine personages. For the portrayal of human beings, they relied more on observation than on prescriptions of the texts¹³⁸. Besides, they also implemented their imagination in their works. Therefore, a radical change and development took place in depicting such sculptures of the Nāthas and the Siddhas along with their vehicles. The initial impact on scholars was the native quality or crudeness of the some of these works, qualities which they immediately connected with folk art; hence the style of Vijayanagara sculpture was defined as folkish¹³⁹. Saletore noted many different aesthetic traditions combined in the formation of the Vijayanagara style of art such as the Deccan, the Tamil and above all the local folk style which are responsible for the earliest sculptures at Vijayanagara. Later on, the Deccan influence lost its ground and the Tamil tradition became dominant in the formation of the mature Vijayanagara style of architecture and sculpture. Thus, the folk as well as the sophisticated temple style co-existed at Vijayanagara, serving different purposes. Most of the sculptures which found in the temples are the depictions of more prominent gods/goddesses and their attendants, local/minor deities, well celebrated heroes or human and divine personalities.

In the evolution of such *Tāntric* sculptures, the sculptors played an important role. In the creation of imagery of deities, the artist had to look into his own heart and

¹³⁷ Dallapiccola, *Op.cit.*, p. 79

¹³⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 7, 10

¹³⁹ R.N. Saletore, *Vijayanagara Art*, Sundeep Prakashan, Delhi, 1982, p.130; also quoted in Anna Dallapiccola, *Op.cit.*, p. 4

create the image that he had in his mind. He had not only to gaze inwardly but also had to practically exclude himself from the external trammels of this world and meditate on the deity he was about to create. Therefore, the characteristic of an image is its power of helping forward contemplation and *yōga*. The human maker of images should therefore be meditative. Besides there is no other way of knowing the character of an image, even direct observation, is of no use. Therefore it was as good as understood that the artist's success depended on the power of his meditation, the outcome of which was the image. Moreover, the images were intended for the ignorant and the artist, who had primarily to become a *yōgi*, had to perceive the images in his heart. These craftsmen sought those sculptures only through ideal forms. Their aim was rarely to represent nature as it appeared to him because, they never attempted to imitate but only aimed at creation of a spiritual nature. They desired to suggest the idea behind sensuous appearance, not to give the detail of the seeming reality that was in truth, but through his *Māyā* or illusion¹⁴⁰. Gopinatha Rao quotes this as

*“Śivātmani paśyaṃti pratimāsu na yōginah
Ajñānām bhāvanārthāya pratimā parikalpitāh”*¹⁴¹.

Hence it may be stated that in most of the Indian sculptures generally a kind of impersonality is present. The artist had to so detach himself from his creation that he leaves no place for his individual fancies to deface the idealism in the facial expression of his image¹⁴². Later on these craftsmen virtually forgot their *Śilpa Śāstric* orders. Sometimes craftsmen had their own ideals in the execution of their art.

When *Tāntric* ideas crept into Indian religious thought, the creative instinct of the Indian artist was constrained to a certain extent and deities came to be represented with various hands and manifold attributes. Thus depiction of images with different *mudrās* (pose) and various weapons clutched in its hands came to represent its qualities and their nature. Hence the *sāttvika* image had the *yōga-mudrā*, conferring boons and encouraging the surrounding worshippers. The fiercer or *rājasika mudra* depicts an image, adorned with a variety of weapons, seated on a *vāhana* and offering

¹⁴⁰ R.N. Saletore, *Vijayanagara Art*, Sundeep Prakashan, Delhi, 1982, p.208

¹⁴¹ T.A. Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, Vol. I, Part II, p.26

¹⁴² R.N. Saletore, *Op.cit.*, p.207

boons to its devotees. The fiercest type was the *tāmasika* pose depicting a terrible form, armed and destroying the demons, symbolizing evil. By the same way, the nāthas are also depicted as they are seated in an assortment of mythical animals like *Vyāli*, *makara*, scorpion, tortoise, snake, boar, fish, lion and tiger. Another view is that this deity entered the Brahmanical pantheon when *Tāntrism* was exerting its influence over many Indian religions, “reversing the trends of progressive thought, thereby inducing many of the deities to reappear in their anthropomorphic forms”. These struggles appear rather far-fetched and conjectural to find any reasonable acceptance. All these types of art exist in the Vijayanagara style of art. However, it is impossible to understand fully the one without the other. The very significant feature of this art is a manifestation of traditional symbolism and it is generally believed to be familiar to at least many¹⁴³ of the common people.

Why these Sculptural Arts developed during Vijayanagara Period?

The Vijayanagara Empire comprised the whole of South India from the south of the river Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, it comprised the territories which are already ruled over by the Kadambas, Pallavas, Cōlas, Pāṇdyas, Chālukyas, Hoysālas, Kākatiyas, etc. Hence traits of all these traditional schools continued to be there in the respective regions though the dominating impact was very much prevalent, particularly arising out of political reasons and due to the changed trend and time. However, the predominating element was more a Dravidian than any other. During the Vijayanagara period, the main stress was on mass and variety in their creations, sometimes not strictly adhering to the established canons, proportions etc.

During the early days of the Vijayanagara Empire, the temples are of modest dimensions like the later Chālukyan ones. Therefore, the sculptural art of the early Vijayanagara have the impact of the Chālukyan style. But when the empire was expanded up to the entire South India, it had to assimilate thoughts and ideas of other schools and regions which influenced the creation of temples and sculptures in bigger dimensions and massive sizes¹⁴⁴. Probably master-sculptors were not employed all the time and for that reason some of the sculptures were left unfinished or finished in

¹⁴³ R.N. Salletore, *Vijayanagara Art*, Sundeep Prakashan, Delhi, 1982, p.208

¹⁴⁴ K.M.Suresh, *Sculptural Art of Hampi*, Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Mysore, 1998, p. 39

crude ways. But normally they are always well-proportioned as seen in most of the sculptures though carved even in granite media.

There prevail many reasons for establishing the immense Hindu temples depicted with various sculptures. One of the principal political reasons was, the southern part of the India was invaded by Mālik Kafur, the general of Khilji Sultān of Delhi in 1311 C.E. and again by another general Muhammad Bin Tughluk in 1327 C.E. The aggressors destroyed the kingdoms, looted the wealth, forcibly converted the Hindus to Islam, and demolished their temples. This contravention of Islam into political, social and religious fields of the Hindus led to the creation of awareness for their traditional religions and institutions. Besides, it also leads to the rousing of a realization for a united and strong response and resistance among the Hindus, particularly in the South. This triggered revival eventually culminated in the founding of the Vijayanagara Empire. Meanwhile, the empire also gained strength and expanded under the foundations of the religious awareness, upsurge and unity of its subjects. Therefore, its rulers, their religious leaders and subjects, all stood united to put an end to the Muslim aggression. For the same purpose, the Vijayanagara rulers organized the *Daśara* festivals as a state function and also popularized and celebrated Holi festival. The officers, nobles, merchants and subjects coming from all parts of their empire attended these festivals in large numbers. All these religious and social activities are sculpted in bas-relief, on the walls of the *Mahānavami Dibba*, *prakāra* walls of Hazara Rāmaswāmy temple etc., of Hampi and in other parts of the south India. Thus the empire, with its able and brave warrior-kings, supported by the subjects of all strata of the kingdom, proved an effective embankment against the expansion of the Muslim authority and culture into the South. Even now, its impact can be realized in this part of the country¹⁴⁵.

As observed by K.M. Suresh, “in the congregational prayers of Muslims, the Hindus must have realized a strong religious link or bond to keep them together and united. It resulted in a feeling of unity and oneness for a common cause. Hence the rituals in temples and other institutions were so much elaborated as never seen before to ensure congregations on frequent occasions. And to facilitate their conduct several

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p. 36

types of *maṇḍapas*, halls and other sub-structures were added to the otherwise comparatively simple and smaller temples as in earlier period. As a result we see the *kalyāṇa maṇḍapas*, *vansatostsava*, *yāga maṇḍapas*, *vēdadhyāna maṇḍapas*, *uyyāle maṇḍapas*, long pillared corridors for pilgrims, separate shrines for the goddesses etc., came into existence and use. Similarly taking out periodical processions became popular, particularly the annual car-festivals which forced them to design and form long but stately car-streets, some of which survived into this day”.

This was also the force behind the tremendous activity both in the construction of temples and production of sculptural wealth, in stone, in metal as well as in other media like wood, painting etc. They used the granite stones largely for their sculptural art. The easy availability of granite stones resulted in the construction of large number of temples, *maṇḍapas*, *gōpuras*, palaces, forts and even monolithic sculptures of massive dimensions throughout their empire. It has even become proverbial in the South to call any tall *gōpura-dwāra* as *Rāya Gōpuram*, *Rāyā* standing for a king of the Vijayanagara Empire¹⁴⁶.

Besides, the tolerant religious situation of the Vijayanagara Empire is reflected in an abundance of ascetic images in both Śaivite and Vaiṣṇavite temples throughout their empire, viz., Hampi, Śrīṅgēri, Śrisailam, Villianūr, Tiruvattāru, Śrīraṅgam, etc. By a study of the comparative iconography of ascetic images at these temples, it is possible to show that Śaivite ascetic iconography predominates, even in Vaiṣṇava temples like Tiruvattāru, Śrīraṅgam, etc., and the main Śaivite sect represented is that of the Nātha Siddhas.

From the above discussion, it is clear that the *tāntric* tradition attained more importance during the medieval period, particularly under Vijayanagara Empire it gained munificent royal support which is reflected in the *tāntric* sculptures on the massive *gōpuras* and large *maṇḍapas* of the temples all over south India. The *Tāntric* cults which include the cult of Nātha-Siddhas, cult of *Bhairavi* and other forms of *yōgic* activities got standardized during this period and appeared in their sculptural forms in all the temples of Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava faiths in the entire South India.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 36-37

Why these kinds of mystical and enigmatic sculptures are placed in the temple *mandapas*, pillars, *prakāras*, *gōpuras*, and *vimānas*, still remain obscure. All of these depictions indicate the continuation and perpetuation of some secret practices that existed prior to the emergence of the Vijayanagar Empire.

The tradition of portraying such *Tāntric* images in the temple *vimānas* and *gōpuras* are still continuing in this present period also. For instance, the mother goddess in birth-giving posture is depicted in the *vimāna* of a temple of local deity in Kaṇṇivādi near Dindigul, the *cakrapūjā* rite is depicted in the *vimāna* of Irumbai Mahākālēśvarā temple; the image of Varāhanātha and other *Tāntric* rites in the Viṣṇu temple at Kālāpet near Puduchērry, the images of Siddhas in various *yōgic* postures, *cakrapūjā* are depicted in the newly renovated *gōpura* of Pērūr Paṭṭīśvarar temple near Coimbatore, images resembling the above said rites are found in the newly erected entrance *gōpura* of Mahānandi in Āndhra Pradesh; and also in the Kōṭē Vēṅkatēśvarā temple at Bangalore, Karnāṭaka. The above said evidences are very few and there are still more representations of such *tāntric* images found in the newly constructed temples at all over south India, indicates the continuity of this *Tāntric* cult in these regions.

To sum up, starting from the early centuries of Christian era, we have references of the usage of the word *siddham* or *siddhi*. These terms may not directly be connected with the Siddha Cult of the medieval period, but may be considered as a root for this tradition. The first authentic epigraphical evidence we find was the Sōḷadēvanahalli inscriptions of Karnāṭaka region which speaks about the existence of Nāthas under the tree and donation of land by the king Rājēndra Cōḷa in 1029 C.E. Then two more inscriptions of Coorg district of Karnāṭaka also refer to a donation of lands to one Siddhēśvara temple. Similarly, there were few *bhikṣa* mutts existed at Tirunelvēli on the southern tip of Tamiḷnādu around 1253 C.E., reveals the truth about the spread of this cult in the whole of south India. These two Tamiḷ inscriptions are not directly speaks about the Siddha cult of those regions, but both of them have the related words of the Siddha cult viz., *Tapasis*, *sisya*, *śivamukthi*, *bhikṣa* mutt, and etc. The *Bhikṣa Vriti Matha* of Śrisailam of Āndhra Pradesh is a well-known place for its siddha cult. During 13th century we have evidence for the spread of the Nātha Siddha tradition into south India. The Nātha sculptures of Kadapa district having the

inscribed names of respective nāthas on the pedestal portion and one inscription in Nellore district, mentioning different *tāntric* sects popular in the region, indicate that the Nātha Siddha cult received royal patronage during the pre-Vijayanagar period also.

Even though, there are varieties of literary evidences regarding the Siddhas of south India, none of them are clear about their chronology. Similarly, the epigraphical evidences are also too rare to study about the chronology of the Siddhas who lived in these regions.

Though we have the usage of the terms related to the ‘Siddha Cult’, from the last quarter of the 1st century B.C. and 1st century C.E., the proper terms like ‘Nātha or Siddha’ appear only after the 10th century in Karnāṭaka region, nearly from 13th century in Tirunelvēli of Tamiḷnādu, and then between 12th and 15th centuries in the regions of Āndhra Pradesh like Kadapa, Śrisailam, Ālampūr and so on.

Though there are some controversies regarding the origin and nativity of the Nātha cult, it is popularly spread over the northern India and the Western Mahārāṣṭrā and largely in south India as a pan Indian movement. Since, these ascetics led a nomadic life; it is natural that their name and fame should spread all over the places they visited. Although traditionally the *nava nātha* cult is an established one, there are glaring regional variations in the names of the Nāthas. Matśyēndra and Gōrakṣa appear commonly in all the lists. The Nāthas are largely identified with the help of sculptural representations in the temples, literary sources and other popular folk lore.

In most of the Tamiḷ region, the sculptures of Gōrakṣanātha or a nātha seated on tiger is worshipped by offering flowers and smearing turmeric, applying vermilion powder on it; devotees are not aware that they are worshipping the Nātha or Siddha, but to them it is Lord Ayyappa who is travelling on a tiger, and they narrate the story of Ayyappa bringing a tiger for its milk. Similarly in some of the temples of South Tamiḷnādu, Mīṇanātha or Matśyēndranātha is worshipped as Lord Kubērā, the protector of the South, telling that fish is the vehicle or symbol of Kubērā. At Viriñjipuram temple in Vēllore district, the nātha seated on a scorpion is worshipped as Lord Yama, and they claims that scorpion is one of his attributes.

Sculptural Representations of Nātha-Siddhas and other *Tāntric* Images



Fig.01, Mīṇanātha, Gōrakṣanātha and Chaurāṅgi seated on their respective vehicles
Mallikārjuna Temple, Śrisailam, Āndhra Pradesh



Fig.02 Mīṇanātha and Bhairavanātha seated on their vehicles, Śrisailam, Āndhra



Fig. 03 & 04. Nāthas/Siddhas in different *yōgic* postures, Śrisailam, Āndhra Pradesh

Sculptures of Navanāthas, Jalakantēśvara Temple, Kalāsipālayam, Karnāṭaka



Fig.05 Mīnanātha



Fig. 06, Gōrakṣa Nātha



Fig.07, Chaurāṅgi Nātha



Fig.08, Vyāli Nātha



Fig.09, Varāha Nātha



Fig.10, Nāga Nātha



Fig.11. Bhairava Nātha



Fig.12. Kūrma Nātha



Fig.13. Nātha on a lion

Navanāthas Sculptures, Sōmēśvara Temple, Ulsūr, Karnāṭaka



Fig.14, Kūrma Nātha



Fig.15, Vyāli Nātha



Fig.16, Nātha on a Lion



Fig.17, Mīṇanātha



Fig.18, Bhairava Nātha



Fig.19, Nāga Nātha



Fig.20, Chaurāṅgi



Fig.21, Varāha Nātha



Fig.22, Gōrakṣa Nātha

Sculptural Representations of Mīṇanātha



Fig. 23 Mīṇanātha with other Siddhas, Mallikārjuna Temple, Śrisailam



Fig.24, Tirukāmēśvara Temple, Villianūr, Puducherry



Fig.25, Tirukkuruṅkudi, Tamilnādu



Fig. 26, Mūlanātha Temple, Bāhūr



Fig. 27, Nandi, Karnātaka



Fig.28, Nandibeta, Karnātaka Fig.29 & 30, Paṭṭināthar Temple, Paṭṭisvaram, TN



Fig.31, Bhūmisvara Temple, Marakāṇam, TN



Fig.32, Brahmadisvara, Tañjāvūr, TN

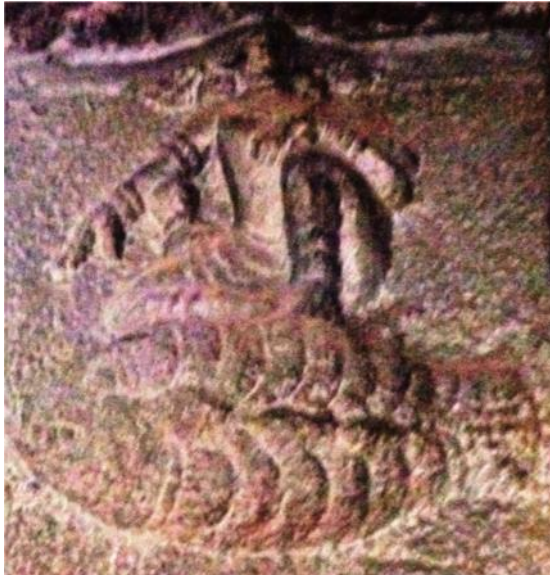


Fig.33, Ēkāmparanātha Temple, Kāñchi, TN



Fig.34, Kāmāṭchi Temple, Kāñchi, TN



Fig.35, Sōmēśvara Temple, Ulsūr, KN



Fig.36, Kōte Veṅkatēśvara Temple, Bangalore



Fig.37, Lower Ahobilam, Kurnūl, A.P



Fig.38, Lower Ahobilam, Kurnūl, A.P



Fig.39, Upper Ahobilam, Kurnūl, A.P



Fig.40, Upper Ahobilam, Kurnūl, A.P



Fig.41, Tiruvaṇṇāmalai, TN



Fig.42, Lēpākṣī A.P



Fig.43, Lēpākṣī, A.P.

Mīnanātha in a Dancing posture



Fig.44, Southern gōpura, Villianūr



Fig.45, Amman Shrine, Tiruvaṇṇāmalai, TN

GŌRAKṢANĀTHA



Fig.46, Prakāra Wall, Śrisailam, Āndhra Pradesh



Fig.47, Mukhamaṇḍapa, Nandi, KN



Fig.48, Mukhamaṇḍapa, Nandi, KN



Fig.49, Southern Gōpura, Villianūr, P Y



Fig.50, Ardhamāṇḍapa, Āvani, KN



Fig.51, Lower Ahobilam, A.P



Fig.52, Brihadīśvara temple, Tañjāvūr, T N



Fig.53, Tirukaḷukunṇam, TN



Fig.54 Tirukaḷukunṇam TN



Fig.55, Tirukaḷukunṇam TN



Fig.56, Chaurāṅgi, Nandi, KN



Fig. 57, Bhairava with Scorpion, Śrisailam



Fig.58, Ulsūr Somēśvara Temple KN

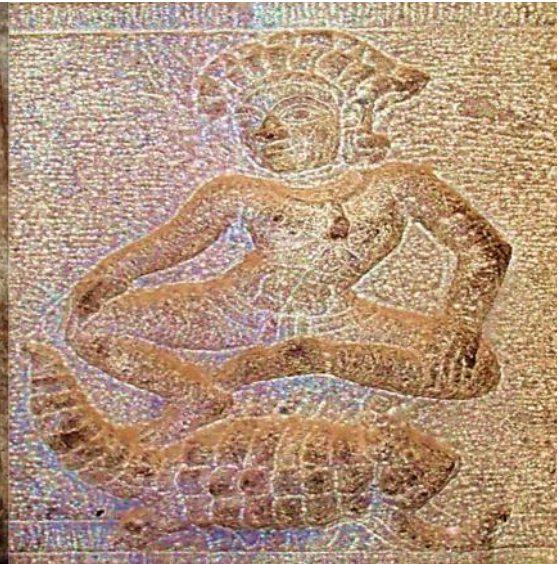


Fig.59, Maṇḍapa pillars, Lower Ahobilam,A.P

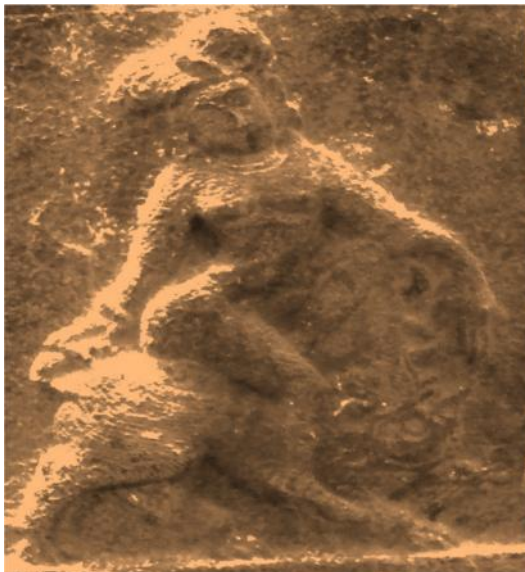


Fig.60, Vyālinātha, Bāhūr ,PY



Fig.61, Ulsūr Sōmēśvara Temple, KN



Fig.62, BhōgaNandīśvara Temple, Nandi, KN Fig. 63, Śrīraṅganātha Temple, TN



Fig.64, Villianūr Temple, PY

Fig.65, Villianūr Temple, PY



Fig.66, Kūrmanātha, Villianūr Temple, PY

Fig.67, Nāganātha, Villianūr Temple, PY



Fig.68, Nāganātha, Ulsūr Sōmēśvara, KN



Fig.69, Nāganātha, Kalāsipālayam, KN



Fig.70 & 71, Varāhanātha, Bhōganandīśvara, Karnāta



Fig.72, Nandibeta,KN



Fig.73&74, Śriraṅgam Temple, TN



Fig.75, Ucchipillaiyār Temple, TN



Fig.76 Tirukalukunṇam, TN



Fig.77, Tirukōlūr, TN



Fig.78, Tirukurunḡudi, TN



Fig.79, Tiruvattāru, TN



Fig.80 & 81, Virudhagiriśvara, Virudhāchalam, TN

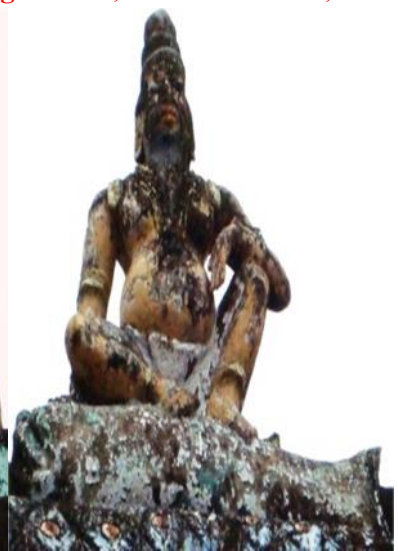


Fig.82, Stucco images of Nāthas, Vīṇāthar Maṇḍapa Top, Tiruvīlīmīlai, T.N

Images representing the performance of *Śiṅganātha* Practices of Nātha-Siddhas



Fig.83 Bāhūr, PY



Fig.84, Kāñchi, TN



Fig.85, Lower Ahobilam, AP



Fig.86, Nandi, Karnāṭaka



Fig.87 & 88, Ulsūr, Karnāṭaka



Fig.89, Villianūr, PY



Fig.90, Virudhāchalam, TN

Representations of *Yōgic* Postures of the Siddhas and Nāthas in the Medieval Temples



Fig.91, Śrisailam, AP

Fig.92, & 93, Nandi, Karnāṭaka



Fig.94, Nandi, Karnāṭaka

Fig.95, Nandi, Karnāṭaka

Fig.96, Nandibeta, Karnāṭaka

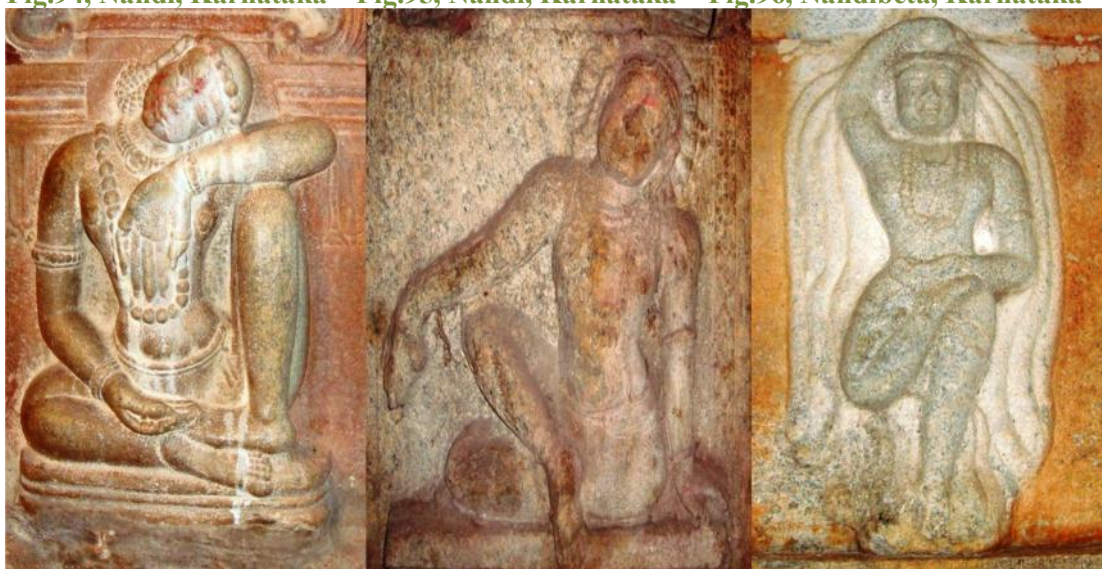


Fig.97, Āvani, Karnāṭaka

Fig.98, Āvani, Karnāṭaka

Fig.99, Āvani, Karnāṭaka



Fig.100, Bāhūr, PY



Fig.101 & 102, Lower Ahobilam, AP



Fig.103 & 104, Lower Ahobilam, AP



Fig.105, Upper Ahobilam, AP



Fig.106 & 107, Marakkāṇam, TN



Fig.108, Kāramadai, TN



Fig.109, Bangalore, KN



Fig.110, Śrirāṅgam, TN



Fig.111, Śrirāṅgam, TN



Fig.112, Tiruchy, TN



Fig.113, Tiruchy, TN



Fig.114, Tiruchy, TN



Fig.115, Tañjavūr, TN



Fig.116, Tiruvotṛiyūr, TN



Fig.117, Villianūr, PY



Fig.118, Villianūr, PY



Fig.119, Villianūr, PY



Fig.120, Villianūr, PY



Fig.121, Villianūr, PY



Fig.122, Virudhāchalam, TN



Fig.123, Virudhāchalam, TN



Fig.124, Ulsūr, KN



Fig.125, Ulsūr, KN



Fig.126, Kalāsipālayam, KN



Fig.127, Kalāsipālayam, KN



Fig.128, Kalāsipālayam, KN



Fig.129, Tiruvattāru, TN



Fig.130, Tiruvattāru,TN



Fig.131, Tiruvattāru,TN



Fig.132, Tiruvattāru,TN



Fig.133, Tiruvattāru,TN



Fig.134, Tiruvattāru,TN



Fig.135, Tiruvattāru,TN



Fig.136, Tiruvattāru,TN



Fig.137, Tiruvattāru,TN



Fig.138, Tiruvattāru,TN



Fig.139, Ceiling Beam, Puthumaṇḍapa, Tiruvotṛiyur, T.N
Ithyphallic Postures of Nāthas and Siddhas



Fig.140, Tiruvattāru Fig.141, Tiruvattāru Fig.142, Tiruvattāru, Fig.143, Tiruvattāru



Fig.144, Bāhūr, PY Fig.145, Sriraṅgam, TN Fig.146, Tirupathisāram Fig.147, Āranmula



Fig.148, Śrisailam, A.P



Fig.149, Paṇḍacōlanallur, Puduchērry



Fig.150, Kōte Veṅkaṭeśvara, KN



Fig.151, Śriraṅgam, TN,



Fig.152, Tiruvattāru, TN



Fig.153, Kāñchi, TN



Fig.154, Kāñchi, TN



Fig.155, Kāñchi, TN



Fig.156, Tirukalukunṇam, TN; Fig.157, Tiruvotṛiyūr, TN Fig.158, Villianūr, Puducherry



Fig.159, Tiruvaṇḍārkoil, Puducherry



Fig.160, Tirumeyyam, TN



Fig.161, & 162 Tirukkaṇṇamaṅgai, Tamilnādu

DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES

Fig. 1: This panel is found on the *prakāra* wall of the Mallikārjuna temple, Śrisailam, Āndhra Pradesh. It depicts Mīṇanātha seated on a fish in a *paryāṅkāśana*, with matted hair, wearing big ear rings (*karṇakuṇḍala*); his right hand is resting on a staff (*yōga-daṇḍa*); his left hand is resting on the folded left knee in a *lōla-hasta* posture. Followed by Mīṇanātha, Gōrakṣanātha is depicted as also in a *paryāṅkāśana* on a tiger, which is in a striding posture. He is wearing big *karṇakuṇḍalas*, his right hand is resting on the back of the tiger and his left hand on the folded left knee in a *lōla-hasta* posture. Next to this, Chaurāṅginātha is depicted as he was seated on a deer with his left leg folded and bound with *yōga-paṭṭa*. The left hand is in *abhaya mudrā* and the right hand is in *vyākarna mudrā*.

Fig. 2: This panel is also from the same temple as above, in which both Mīṇanātha and Bhairavanātha are depicted facing each other. Both are found with matted hair with a big *kuṇḍala* in their ears; cross bands from their shoulders; bangle like ornaments in their forearm and hand; and both are wearing *laṅgoti* (loin cloth) under their waist. Mīṇanātha wearing the *rudrākṣamāla* in his neck, his left hand in a *daṇḍa-hasta mudrā* posture is resting on the *yōga-daṇḍa* which is placed on the fish; his right hand is resting on the tail of the fish in a *katya valambita mudrā*; his left leg is folded and rested on the fish and his right leg is hanging in *lalitāsana* pose. Similarly, Bhairavanātha is also in a *lalitāsana* pose whose right leg is folded and resting on the scorpion and the left leg is hanging. He is wearing some necklace like ornament; his left hand in a *daṇḍa-hasta mudrā* posture resting on the *yōga-daṇḍa*, which is placed on the scorpion; his right leg is folded and resting on his right thigh.

Fig. 3: This panel is also found in the *prakāra* wall of Śrisailam temple, in which two Siddhas were depicted in different *yōgic* postures. First one is *kukutāsana*, as his both hands are resting in the ground and his legs are joined together as in *añjali* pose. On his long ears he is wearing big *kuṇḍalas*. The second one is in another *yōgic* posture called *Garbhāsana*, whose legs are bound with *yōga-paṭṭa*. His right leg is folded upward and resting in the ground and his left leg is folded and its foot is rested on the right knee. His chin is resting on his left hand palm. He is wearing cross bands, and bangle like rings are found on his wrists.

Fig. 4: This panel is also found in the *prakāra* wall of Śrisailam temple, in which two Siddhas are depicted in *yōgic* postures. First one is seated in a *padmāsana*. He is wearing a *laṅgōti*. His head is facing upwards, and supported with his right hand arm. His left hand is resting on a *yōga-daṇḍa*. Both his wrists are joined together in a *Gaṇḍēśa mudrā*. In the second one, he is seated folding his left leg, which is held thus with his right hand (*Bharadwājāsana*?); his left hand is hanging towards earth. His head is found with matted hair resting on the left leg knee. He is wearing necklace like ornament on his chest, bangle like rings on his wrist and a *laṅgoti*.

Fig. 5 to 13, are depicted on two pillars on either side of the (*mukhamāṇḍapa*) of the *Jalakṛtīśwara temple in Kalāsipālayam, near Bangalore in Karnātaka, datable to late or post Vijayanagara period 16th – 17th century.*

Fig. 5: Mīṇanātha seated on fish as his right hand is resting on his right leg knee and his left folded. His left hand is completely resting on the fish in a *katyavalambita mudrā*. He is wearing bangle like rings on his both arms and wrists and a thick necklace like ornament; a *yōga-daṇḍa* is placed behind his right hand knee, a wallet is tied in his left hand arm; he is having the matted hair and wearing big *kaṇḍaḥ*.

Fig. 6: Gōrakṣanātha in *rājalīlāsana* on a tiger. His *kuṇḍala* are clearly visible hanging from his long ears. He is wearing necklace like ornament and a wallet is tied on his left arm. His left hand is resting on his left foot and his right hand is resting on the folded right leg knee.

Fig. 7: Chaurāṅginātha seated comfortably, by hanging his legs freely on the caparisoned deer and riding it by holding the bridles/reins in his left hand which are tied to its mouth. A wallet is tied on his left arm, and bangle like rings are found on his both wrists and arms, big *kuṇḍalas* on his ears, and necklace like ornament are visible. He is depicted as holding the deer horn in his right hand as he is producing the *Siṅganātha* –‘a roar of a lion’.

Fig. 8: Vyālinātha on a *Vyāli*, a mythical animal having elephant trunk, and lion’s body. *Vyāli* is in a striding posture with its’ trunk elevated upwards. His left hand is resting on the left knee in a *daṇḍa-hasta mudrā*. He is wearing big *kaṇḍaḥ* and cross bands on his chest.

Fig. 9: A Nātha seated on a boar. His head tilted slightly upward; he is wearing the *kaṇḍaḥ*, cross bands on his chest with a medallion and bangle like rings on his both arms and wrist. His right hand is resting on his right leg and left hand in *daṇḍa-hasta mudrā*, resting on the left knee.

Fig. 10: Nāganātha seated on a coiled snake raising its hood. He is facing slightly upward. His *kuṇḍala* in ears, rings in his wrists are clearly depicted. His right leg is folded and he is keeping his both hand on his left knee, on which he resting his chin.

Fig. 11: Bhairavanātha on a scorpion. He is wearing the *kaṇḍaḥ*, cross band on his chest, along with a medallion. He is holding in his right hand a deer horn in his mouth. His left hand is resting on the toe of right leg, which is resting on the scorpion.

Fig.12: Kūrmanātha on a tortoise. His right leg is folded resting on the tortoise. His right hand is resting on his right leg. He is folded and resting his left hand on his left leg knee. Rings on his both wrists, cross bands on his chest, a loin cloth (*laṅgōti*) and *kaṇḍaḥ* are clearly depicted.

Fig. 13: A Nātha on a striding lion. His head is slightly tilted upward. He is wearing *kaṇḍaḥ*, cross bands on his chest, rings on his arms and wrists. He is wearing a *laṅgōti*. His right hand is resting on his right leg and his left leg is resting on his left knee.

From Fig.14 to Fig.22, the Navanāthas are depicted in the ardhamandapa wall of the Sōmēśvara temple at Ulsūr near Bangalore which belongs to the post Vijayanagara period, probably constructed by the Gowdas during 16th -17th century. All the nine Nāthas are depicted in a single line continuously along with their vehicles, from left to

right respectively tortoise, Vyāli, lion, fish, scorpion, deer, boar, snake and tiger which is the unique feature of this temple.

Fig.14: Kūrmanātha on a tortoise in *lalitāsana*. His head is resting on the right palm. His right leg is elevated and placed right thigh. His left hand is resting on the left leg, which is folded and resting on the tortoise. His hair is matted. He is wearing a cross-band and a necklace like ornament.

Fig.15: Vyālinātha in *rājalīlāsana* on a *Vyāli*, which is in a striding posture. In his right hand resting on the *Vyāli*, he is holding the deer horn close to his mouth. His left hand is in *lōla-hasta* pose resting on the left leg knee. His hair is matted and *karnakuṇḍalas* are clearly depicted.

Fig.16: A Nātha on a lion in *rājalīlāsana*. His right hand is resting on the right thigh in a *katya valambita mudrā* and his left hand is resting on the left knee in a *lōla-hasta mudrā*. His head is resting on his left shoulder.

Fig.17: Mīṇanātha on a fish. His right hand is resting on the fish in a *katya valambita mudrā*. His left palm is resting on the left knee. He is wearing a wallet on his left shoulder. A *trisūla* (trident) is placed behind him.

Fig.18: Bhairavanātha on a scorpion in *pariyāṅkāsana*. A trident is placed behind him. With his right hand, he is holding the deer horn in his mouth. His left hand is resting on the scorpion and a wallet is tied on his left shoulder. He is wearing big *kuṇḍalas*, a necklace like ornament, cross-bands and a medallion on his chest.

Fig.19: Nāganātha in *rājalīlāsana* on a snake whose hood is raised facing left. A wallet is shown on his left shoulder, and the left hand is resting on his left thigh in a *katya valambita mudrā* and his right hand is resting on his right knee. He is wearing rings on his arms and wrists. A deer horn tied to a band on his chest is clearly depicted.

Fig.20: Chaurāṅginātha riding the deer in *lalitāsana* by holding its reins in his right hand and keeping a deer horn in his mouth with his right hand.

Fig.21: A Varāhanātha on a boar; his right hand is resting on the right knee and left hand resting on the boar in a *katya valambita mudrā*. He is wearing a wallet on his left shoulder and in both arms and wrists he is wearing the rings.

Fig.22: Gōrakṣanātha on a tiger. His head is tilted downward and resting on his hands which are resting on his right knee. His left leg is folded and resting on the tiger. He is wearing the *karnakuṇḍalas* and rings on his wrists. A wallet is also visible on his left shoulder.

Fig.23: A panel from Śrisailam temple in which Mīṇanātha along with other Siddhas is depicted in *yōgic* postures. Mīṇanātha is on a fish in a *pariyāṅkāsana*. His right hand is resting on the fish and a wallet is tied at the shoulder. He is holding the *rudrākṣamāla*, *yōga-daṇḍa* and a *kamaṇḍala* in his left hand. He is facing the other Siddhas on this panel. Next to him, the Gōrakṣa is on a tiger skin, in *padmāsana*. His hands are holding the *yōga-daṇḍa*, on which his head is resting. He is wearing *laṅgōti*, anklets, and bangle

like rings on his wrists. Next to him is a Siddha yogi with *laṅgōti* is depicted offering a deer horn to Gōrakṣa seated on the tiger skin. Another Siddha is depicted in a typical *Garbhāsana* pose as shown in Fig.3. His right leg is folded and resting in the ground, his left leg foot is resting on his right leg knee. His left hand is resting on the left leg knee, and his head is resting on his left hand palm. He is wearing a *rudrākṣamāla* in his neck and in his arms; and *kuṇḍalas* in his ears.

Fig. 24: This sculpture is found on the southern *gōpura* entrance of the Tirukāmēśvara temple at Villiaṅūr, Puducherry. In this Mīṇanātha is seated on a fish in *lalitāsana* with his left leg hanging on the fish and his right leg is folded upward; his right hand is resting in a *daṇḍa-hasta mudrā*. His left hand is resting on the fish in a *katya valambita mudrā*. His hair is matted and long ears are visible. On his chest, he is wearing the deer horn as a medallion.

Fig.25: This panel is found on the *maṇḍapa* wall of the Nambirāya Perumal temple at Tirukuruṅgudi in Nāṅgunēri *tāluk* of Tirunelvēli Dist., Tamilnādu. Though the temple dates back to the Cōlā's times, this sculpture belongs to the post Vijayanagara or Nāyaka period. In this Mīṇanātha is artistically shown seated on a fish in *ardha-paryāṅkāsana*. His matted hair, long ears with big *kuṇḍala* and a wallet hanging from his left shoulder are clearly depicted. A *yōga-paṭṭa* is shown holding the folded right knee to his waist. He is holding a *yōga-daṇḍa* with both hands on which he is resting his chin. His right hand is stretched resting on his right knee in a *katya valambita mudrā*. The fish is also depicted very typically with large teeth. Behind him a boat with two sailors and the captain with the saddle are shown.

Fig. 26: Mīṇanātha (Mūlanātha temple at Bāhūr, Puducherry) on a fish in an *ardha-paryāṅkāsana*. He is shown with matted hair, wearing *rudrākṣamāla*, a ring on his wrist and arms; left hand resting on the fish in a *katya valambita mudrā*, and he is holding an *ēka tāra vīna (kiṇḍjuri?)* in his right hand.

Fig.27: Mīṇanātha (Bōganandīśvara temple, Nandi village, Chikballapur dist., Karnāṭaka) on a fish in *lalitāsana*. His right hand is resting on the fish in a *katya valambita mudrā*, and his head is resting on the left hand palm. A medallion on his chest, rings in his arms and wrists, *karṇakuṇḍalas* are clearly depicted.

Fig.28: A rare, unique typical miniature sculpture of Mīṇanātha (Yōganandīśvara temple, Nandibeta, Karnāṭaka) performing *ēka pāda sirisāsana* on a fish. He is holding the staff in his left hand and his right leg is on his back of the neck. His left leg is holding the *yōga-daṇḍa* and the left foot is held by his right hand. A medallion of deer horn is on his chest.

Fig.29: Mīṇanātha (Paṭṭināthar temple, Paṭṭisvaram, Kumbakōṇam dist., Tamilnādu). In the *kudus* found on the *adhīstāna* of this temple, many miniature sculptures are depicted with different *yōgic* postures. Of which, an image of Mīṇanātha is depicted in *rājalīlāsana*. He is carrying the *ēka-tāra vīna (kiṇḍjuri?)* in his both hands. He is wearing *karṇakuṇḍalas*; rings on his wrists and ankles.

Fig.30: Mīṇanātha (Paṭṭināthar temple, Paṭṭiṣvaram, Kumbakōṇam dist., Tamiḷnādu) in *Lalitāsana*. In his right hand he is holding a fly whisk and his left hand is in *katya valambita mudrā* resting on his left knee which is folded and elevated upward. His matted hair, *kuṇḍalas* in ears, rings on hands, anklets, and *laṅgōti* are clearly depicted.

Fig.31: Mīṇanātha (Bhumīśvara -mudaiyār temple, Marakāṇam, Tamiḷnādu) on a fish in *ardha-matśyēndrāsana*. His left leg is tied with a *yōga-paṭṭa* with his hip. His right hand is resting in *daṇḍa-hasta mudrā* and his left hand is on the fish in a *katya valambita mudrā*. He is wearing the rings in his arms and wrists. His matted hair and *kuṇḍalas* are clearly depicted. He is wearing *rudrākṣamāla* in his neck. Some more sculptures in different *asanas* are also found in this temple.

Fig.32: Mīṇanātha (Brahadīśvara temple, Tañjāvūr, Tamiḷnādu) seated facing upward in *ardha-matśyēndrāsana*. He is shown with a beard and long matted hair locks. Big *karnakuṇḍalas*, rings on his arms and wrists, and a *yōga-paṭṭa* tied to his left knee are clearly visible. His right hand is resting on the fish in a *katya valambita mudrā* and his left hand is resting on the left knee in a *daṇḍa-hasta mudrā*.

Fig.33: Mīṇanātha (Ēkāmparanātha temple, Kāñchipuram, Tamiḷnādu) in *ardha-matśyēndrāsana* is artistically depicted with his appendages like long matted hair, rings on his arms and wrists, a wallet on his left shoulder, large *kuṇḍalas*, etc. On his thigh, a small *yōga-daṇḍa* is placed on which his right hand is resting in a *daṇḍa-hasta mudrā*. Fish is also depicted in an artistic way.

Fig.34: Mīṇanātha (Kāmāṭchi Amman temple, Kāñchipuram, Tamiḷnādu) in a *ardhamatśyēndrāsana* pose with his left leg folded upward and his left hand resting on his left knee in *daṇḍa-hasta mudrā*. His right hand is resting on his folded right leg. His matted hair, *kuṇḍalas* and rings on arms and wrists are clearly visible. Fish is also depicted in small size.

Fig.35: Mīṇanātha (Sōmēśvara temple, Ulsūr, Karnāṭaka) in *ardhamatśyēndra* pose. His right hand is resting on his right knee and his left hand is resting on the fish in a *katya valambita mudrā*. His matted hair, *kuṇḍalas*, rings on his arms, ornament in his neck are clearly visible. Similarly sculptures of this kind are also found in other pillars of this *maṇḍapa*.

Fig.36: Mīṇanātha (Kōṭe Veṅkaṭēśvara temple, Tipu Palace, Bangalore, Karnāṭaka) in *ēka pāda sirisāsana* in which his right leg folded back and resting on his neck and his right hand is placed on the fish in a *katya valambita mudrā*. His left leg folded towards his right leg and locked in the gap between his right arm and right leg thigh. And his left hand is holding strongly his left leg. His long matted hair, *kuṇḍalas*, rings in arms, wrists and anklet are clearly depicted.

Fig.37: Mīṇanātha (Lower Ahobilam, Kurnūl dist., Āndhra Pradesh) in *ardhamatśyēndrāsana*. His hairdo, *kuṇḍalas*, medallion on his chest and his face are sculpted beautifully. His right hand is resting on the folded right knee in a *daṇḍa-hasta mudrā* and his left hand is placed on his left thigh in a stylistic way.

Fig.38: Mīṇanātha (Lower Ahobilam, Kurnūl dist., Āndhra Pradesh) on the *adhistāna* of the *vāhana maṇḍapa* along with other Nātha-Siddhas like Gōrakṣa. He is seated on a long fish in an *ardhapadmāsana* pose. He is wearing a thick sacred thread in his neck, tied with a pendent. He is holding a *saṅkha* (horn deer?) like instrument in his right hand and his left hand is resting on his left thigh.

Fig.39: Mīṇanātha (Upper Ahobilam, Kurnūl dist., Āndhra Pradesh) in *ardhamatsyēndrāsana* depicted artistically with all his appendages like a medallion on his chest, a wallet on his shoulder, a *laṅgōti*, *kaṇṇakunḍalas*, etc. On his left thigh, a *yōga-daṇḍa* is placed on which his left hand is in a *lōla-hasta* pose. His head is tilted towards right and resting in his right palm. His hairdo is a typical Vijayanagara coiffure style.

Fig.40: One of the most exquisite and elegant depictions of Mīṇanātha (Upper Ahobilam, Kurnūl dist. Āndhra Pradesh) in *rājalīlāsana* pose with his head looking upward. His hairdo, *kuṇḍalas*, a wallet in his right hand arm, rings in his arms and wrists, anklets, *yōga-paṭṭa* tied between his hip and left leg, right hand resting on the *yōga-daṇḍa*, are all beautifully depicted. His left hand is resting on his left knee in *daṇḍa-hasta mudrā*.

Fig. 41: Mīṇanātha (Amman temple, Tiruvaṇṇāmalai, Tamiḷnādu) depicted with a tonsured head. He is wearing a patched garment in his neck, rings on arms and wrists, anklet in his leg, *kuṇḍalas* in his ears, *yōga-paṭṭa* in his hip tied with his left leg, left hand resting on left knee and right hand resting on right thigh are the common features. A halo (*prabhamaṇḍala*) is shown around the head.

Fig. 42: Mīṇanātha (Vīrabhadra temple, Lēpākṣi, Ananthpur dist., Āndhra Pradesh) seated on a fish. His matted hair, medallion, wallet, *kuṇḍalas* are clearly visible. His right leg is lying on the fish and on folded left leg he is keeping both his hands. Among the Navanāthas, only the sculptures of Mīṇanātha in different postures are found on many pillars of this temple.

Fig.43: Very rare representation of Mīṇanātha (Vīrabhadra temple, Lēpākṣi, Ananthpur dist., Āndhra Pradesh) in a swaying pose; seated on a fish in *ardhapadmāsana* and his body and head bends towards his left along with his both hands raised above his head as he is clapping and dancing.

Fig.44: Mīṇanātha (Tirukāmēśvarar temple, Villiaṇūr, Puduchērry) in *tribhaṅga* pose as he is dancing on a fish holding a *ēka tāra vīna* (*kiṇṇjuri*?) in his hand, along with all other his above said appendages like *laṅgōti*, ear-rings, etc.

Fig.45: Mīṇanātha (Aruṇāchalēśvara temple, Tiruvaṇṇāmalai, Tamiḷnādu) in a rare dancing posture. In this, all other his appendages like rings on his arms and wrists, medallion on his chest, cross bands, *laṅgōti*, matted hair, *kuṇḍalas*, etc. are clearly depicted.

Fig.46: Gōrakṣanātha (Śrisailam, Kurnūl dist., Āndhra Pradesh) seated on a tiger shown with the appendages like big *kuṇḍalas*, cross bands and medallion, *rudrākṣamāla* on his chest, rings on his arms and wrists, matted hair, etc. His right hand in *daṇḍa-hasta mudrā* is resting on his right knee and his left hand and left leg are resting on the back of the

tiger. Opposite to Gōrakṣa, a Siddha is seated on a *yōga-daṇḍa* in *padmāsana* with both hands resting on his thighs. He is also wearing the appendages like the Gōrakṣa as said above; under him a *kamaṇḍala* is placed. Their background indicates that they are meditating in the forest.

Fig.47: Gōrakṣanātha (Bōganandīśvara temple, Nandi, Karanātaka) in *ardhapadmāsana*. His right hand is resting on the right knee in a *katya valambita mudrā* and the left hand and left leg on the tiger's back in *daṇḍa hasta mudrā*. He is wearing *kuṇḍalas*, rings on arms and wrists, anklets on his legs.

Fig.48: Gōrakṣanātha (Bōganandīśvara temple, Nandi, Karanātaka) is wearing a medallion in his chest. Other characteristic features as seen in Fig.47 are also shown here.

Fig.49: Gōrakṣanātha (Tirukāmēśvarar temple, Villianūr, Puduchērry) seated on a striding tiger. He is wearing *yōga-paṭṭa* in his left leg and other similar appendages like Mṇanātha, which is also depicted at the same place. His left hand is resting on the left knee and his right hand is resting on his right thigh in a *katya valambita mudrā*.

Fig.50: Gōrakṣanātha (Rāmalingēśvara temple, Āvani, Karnātaka) is shown here with his right leg hanging on the tiger and left leg is folded and placed on the back of the tiger; his left hand is resting on his left knee in a *daṇḍa-hasta* pose. In his right hand, he is holding a fly whisk like ornament. Many similar sculptures of Gōrakṣa are also found in the same *maṇḍapa*.

Fig.51: Gōrakṣanātha (Lower Ahobilam, Kurnūl dist., Āndhra Pradesh) is shown with long *kuṇḍalas* on his ears, medallion on his chest. His head is shown resting in his left palm; his right hand is resting on his right thigh in a *katya valambita mudrā*.

Fig. 52: Gōrakṣanātha (Brahadīśvara temple, Tañjāvūr, Tamiḷnādu) in *lalitāsana*. His right hand is in *daṇḍa-hasta mudrā*, resting on his right knee and his left hand is resting on a *yōga-daṇḍa*, which is placed on his left thigh. He is wearing a *laṅgōti*, big *kuṇḍalas*, medallion on his chest, rings on his arms and wrists; and anklets on his legs.

Fig. 53: Gōrakṣanātha (Tirukaḷukunṇam temple, Chengulpet dist., Tamiḷnādu) in *rājalīlāsana*. His right hand is resting on the right knee in a *katya valambita mudrā* and the left hand and left leg on the tiger's back in *daṇḍa hasta mudrā*. He is wearing *kuṇḍalas*, rings on arms and wrists, anklets on his legs.

Fig.54: Gōrakṣanātha (Tirukaḷukunṇam temple, near Chennai, Tamiḷnādu) in *lalithāsana*. Unlike other sculptures, in this, tiger is facing left, while in all other sculptures it is facing. His matted hair is beautifully shown in the form of flaring flames, *karṇakuṇḍalas*, deer horn as a medallion, *yōga-paṭṭa* holding the folded left leg tied to the waist; a *laṅgōti*, anklets, a wallet on his shoulder are clearly depicted.

Fig.55: Gōrakṣanātha (Tirukaḷukunṇam temple, Chengulpet dist., Tamiḷnādu) with his left hand in *abhayamudrā* and his right hand is in *daṇḍa-hasta mudrā* resting on his right knee in a *rājalīlāsana*. His matted hair, *kuṇḍala*, and ornaments in his neck are clearly depicted.

Fig.56: Chaurāṅginātha (Bhōganandīśvara temple, Nandi, Karnāṭaka) riding the deer. His right hand is in *varada mudrā* and his left hand holding the reins of the deer. Anklet is shown on his left leg; rings in his wrists, *kuṇḍalas* on his ears, a shaft like object behind him are clearly seen.

Fig.57: Bhairava (Śrisailam, Kurnūl dist., Āndhra Pradesh) on a rounded block of stone on the top of the *prakāra* wall, in which along with all of his appendages, a scorpion is depicted under his feet; as scorpion being the *lānchana* of Lord Bhairava. Scorpion under feet of the Bhairava is also found in a dilapidated sculpture at Mūlanātha temple in Bāhūr.

Fig. 58: Bhairavanātha (Sōmēśvara temple, Ulsūr, Karnāṭaka) in a *padmāsana* on a scorpion. Both hands are resting on his thighs. His matted hairs, *karṇakuṇḍalas*, medallion on his chest are clearly depicted. Similar other sculpture is also found in the same temple as well as in Kalāsipālayam, Viriñjipuram near Vellore of Tamiḷnādu, etc.

Fig.59: Bhairavanātha (Lower Ahobilam, Kurnūl dist., Āndhra Pradesh) on the *vāhana maṇḍapa* pillar. Seated on a scorpion in a *tribhaṅga* pose, with his right leg bent upward on which his right hand is resting and he is keeping his left leg. He is slightly turned towards his right side, his *karṇakuṇḍalas*, big medallion on chest, *laṅgōti* under his waist are clearly depicted.

Fig.60: Vyālinātha (Mūlanātha temple, Bāhūr, Puduchērry) seated on a *Vyāli*. His hairdo is in typical Chāḷukyan style. His right hand is in *katya valambita mudrā* resting on the tail/back of the *Vyāli* and his left hand on its head. Necklace like ornament on chest, big *karṇakuṇḍalas*, rings on his wrists are clearly depicted. In all other later examples, the *Vyāli* is facing right, but in this example it is facing left.

Fig.61: Vyālinātha (Sōmēśvara temple, Ulsūr, Karnāṭaka) in *ardhapariyaṅkāsana* pose. The *Vyāli* is facing right and his right hand is probably placed on the *Vyāli*'s mouth/trunk. His left hand is resting on his left knee, which is resting on the *Vyāli*. The general appendages of other *Navanāthas* are also found in him.

Fig.62: Vyālinātha (Bhōganandīśvara temple, Nandi, Karnāṭaka) seated on a striding *Vyāli* in *ardha-matsyēndrāsana*. His left hand is folded and resting on the left knee, which is already folded upward and footed on *Vyāli*. His right hand is unfolded as he is showing his palm in a *hamsapakṣa mudrā*. His head is slightly bent towards left. His matted hair, big *kuṇḍalas*, deer horn as a medallion on his chest tied in a thick woollen like thread, rings on his arms and wrists are clearly depicted.

Fig.63: Vyālinātha (Amman shrine, Raṅganātha temple, Śrīraṅgam, Tamiḷnādu). It is similar to Fig.62 in all the features and *mudrās*.

Fig.64: Vyālinātha (Tirukāmēśvarar Temple, Villianūr, Puduchērry) is having long matted hair, which also covered his ears. He is wearing a *laṅgōti* and cross belts on his chests. His right leg is hanging down and the left leg is folded upward on the back of the *Vyāli*. He is holding a flag like attribute in his right hand and his left hand is resting on the left knee in *lōla-hastamudra*. A wallet on his left shoulder is also visible.

Fig.65: Vyālinātha (Tirukāmēśvarar Temple, Villianūr, Puducherry). In this *Vyāli* is clearly depicted as it is fierce fully striding, by opening its mouth and showing its big teeth. He is seated on it as in Fig.63. He is wearing *laṅgōti*, holding a fly whisk in his right hand and his left hand is resting on the back of the *Vyāli* in a *katyavalambita mudrā*. His matted hair, big ear rings, necklace like ornament, medallion of deer horn, rings on his wrists, a wallet on his left shoulder are clearly depicted.

Fig.66: Kūrmanātha (Tirukāmēśvarar Temple, Villianūr, Puducherry) in *ardha-padmāsana* pose. His right hand is resting on his right thigh and his left hand is resting on the left knee, which is already folded upward. A wallet is hanging on his left shoulder. He is wearing ornaments like necklaces, medallion, rings on his wrists and arms, *kuṇḍala* on ears, loin cloth, etc. His hair is also matted. Kūrmanātha representations are very rare in the Vijayanagara sculptural art.

Fig.67: Nāganātha (Tirukāmēśvarar Temple, Villianūr, Puducherry) is seated on an elevated place and under his foot a snake is depicted with its raising hood. All the characteristic Nātha appendages are shown: matted hair, big *kuṇḍalas*, necklace like ornament, deer horn medallion, rings on his wrists and *laṅgōti*. A *yōga-daṇḍa* is placed on a tail of the snake, on which Nāganātha resting his left hand and his right hand in *daṇḍa-hasta mudrā* is resting on his folded right knee.

Fig.68: Nāganātha (Sōmēśvara temple, Ulsūr, Karnāṭaka) in a *Parāṅkāsana* on a folded snake which is raising its hood. His left leg is resting on his folded right leg. His left hand is resting on the snake in a *katya valambita mudrā* and his right hand is on his left knee in a *lōla-hasta mudrā*. His *laṅgōti*, *kuṇḍala*, matted hair, wallet on his left shoulder and cross bands on his chest are clearly visible.

Fig.69: Nāganātha (Jalakāṇṭhēśvara temple, Kalāsipālayam, Karnāṭaka) is holding the snake in his left hand in an *Upavesāsana* (squatting position) instead of seated on it; and a wallet is hanging on his right hand which is already in *chin mudrā*. His matted hair, *kuṇḍalas*, thick woollen cross bands are purposefully shown.

Fig.70: Varāhanātha (Bhōganandīśvara temple, Nandi, Karnāṭaka) in *lalitāsana* on a boar, similar to Vyālinātha (Fig.62) found in this temple. His right hand is in a *chinmudrā* and his left hand is in *daṇḍa-hasta mudrā*. A long cross band on his left shoulder, a big medallion in his neck, *kuṇḍala* in his ears, rings on his wrists and arms, and anklets on his legs are clearly depicted.

Fig.71: Varāhanātha (Bhōganandīśvara temple, Nandi, Karnāṭaka) standing in a *Vrkśāsana* pose, by holding right toe on the earth and his folded left leg resting on the right thigh. His both hands are raised above his head in *añjali mudrā*. He is having a long beard and long hairlocks on his head. A boar is depicted standing behind him. Usually in the examples of Nandi, Ulsūr and Kalāsipālayam, Varāhanātha is depicted as seated on a boar. But in this and all other sculptures in Tamil region, this Nātha is depicted in *Vrkśāsana* pose.

Fig.72: Varāhanātha (Yōganandīśvara temple, Nandibeta, Karnāṭaka) in *Vrkśāsana*: standing on his left toe and folding his right leg upward to his naval and holding it with

his left hand. He is holding his right hand on his head. He is shown with beard and long hair and a boar is standing behind him. Unlike other examples, he is found with female attendants on his either sides holding fly whisks (*cāmara*) in their hands and their coiffure is in typical Nāyaka style.

Fig.73: Varāhanātha (Śrīraṅgam temple, Śrīraṅgam, Tamilnādu) is in *Vrkśāsana* pose, standing on his left leg in *añjali mudrā* and his right leg is folded towards his left knee. He is wearing a loin cloth, rings on his arms and wrists and found with a short beard. A small boar is standing behind him. His hairdo is in typical Chālukyan style.

Fig.74: Varāhanātha (Srirangam temple, Srirangam, Tamilnādu) is shown as an old man and having a long hair flowing down in locks on the shoulders. He is standing in his left leg in usual *Vrkśāsana* pose. His right leg is folded and placed on his left thigh. A boar is standing behind him. A long wallet is shown from the left shoulder.

Fig.75: Varāhanātha (Ucchipillaiyār temple, Trichy, Tamilnādu). This is almost similar to the one shown in fig.74. However, a *rudrākṣamāla* in his neck and a *laṅgōti* in his under waist are clearly depicted.

Fig.76: A Siddha (Tirukaḷukunṇam Murugaṇ temple, Chengelpet, Tamilnādu) is shown with a frail body the ribcage and its bones are visible. He is standing on his right toe and his left leg is folded towards his naval. He is holding his hands above the head with both index fingers locked together. He is depicted with beard and a long hair on his back. A boar is standing to his right side.

Fig.77: A Siddha (Tirukōlūr Viṣṇu temple, south Tamilnādu) is standing in usual *Vrkśāsana* pose on his left leg and his right leg is folded to his left thigh. His hands are raised above his head in *añjali mudrā*. He is having a beard and a long hair which is hanging back from his head. He is wearing a *dothi* on his waist. Big *karnakuṇḍalas*, rings on his arms and wrists, and a boar behind him are shown.

Fig.78: Varāhanātha (Tirukuruṅgudi, Tirunelvēli dist., Tamilnādu) is found in a separate miniature shrine in the niche, indicating his important place probably as the *varāha* incarnation of Viṣṇu. (In the same temple Mīṇanātha is depicted in a very artistically. See Fig.25).

Fig.79: Varāhanātha (Tiruvattāru, Kaṇṇiyākumari dist., Tamilnādu). Nearly 2300 sculptures of different kinds are found on the outer *prakāra* pillars of this temple and one doesn't resemble the other. Among these, more than twenty sculptures of Varāhanātha are found. In this sculpture, Varāhanātha is depicted as standing in a *Vrkśāsana* pose on his right leg and his left leg is folded upward to his left thigh. His hands are raised above his head in *añjali mudrā*. He is wearing a *laṅgōti* and long hair in his head. Behind him a boar is placed and above him an *Aṣṭatāla Padmā* is depicted.

Fig. 80: Varāhanātha (Virudhāchalam, Cuddalore dist., Tamilnādu) is in a *Vrkśāsana* pose standing on his right leg and his left leg is folded upward to his right thigh. He is wearing a *laṅgōti* and having long hair. His hands are raised above his head in *añjali*

mudrā. A boar is standing behind him. There are numerous similar sculptures of Varāhanātha in this temple.

Fig.81: Varāhanātha (Virudhāchalam, Cuddalore dist., Tamilnādu) meditating in a forest, where a tree and a hunter are also depicted in distance. He is in *Vrkśāsana* pose standing on his right leg and his left leg is folded and placed in his right thigh. His hands raised above his head in *añjali mudrā*. A boar is standing behind him. Here the shape of the tree is depicted to show the resemblance of the shape of the Siddha in his *Vrkśāsana* pose.

Fig.82: Natha Siddhas in Stucco (Tiruvīlimiḷalai, Kumbakōṇam dist., Tamilnādu). These stucco sculptures are on the top of a *maṇḍapa* in the Vīṇātha temple. Three Nātha-Siddhas are shown seated on their respective vehicles. Unlike other examples, here a Nātha is seated on a bull in a *rājālīlāsana* pose. He is wearing the sacred thread, rings on his arms, necklace like ornaments with a medallion in his neck and anklets on his legs. He is having beard and knotted hair. His left hand is resting on the bull's back in a *katya valambita mudra* (?) and his right hand is in *daṇḍa-hasta mudrā*. Next to this, is a Nātha is seated on a lion. He is wearing *yōga-paṭṭa* on his both legs tied to his hip, and both hands are rested on respective knees in a *daṇḍa-hasta mudrā*. He is also wearing rings on his arms, beard and knotted hair on his head. Next to this, is the stucco image of Mīṇanātha. He is wearing a loin cloth and seated on a fish in a *rājālīlāsana* pose. His right hand is resting on his right thigh in a *katya valambita mudrā* and his left hand is on his up-folded left leg knee. He is also wearing the rings on his wrists, anklets. These stucco sculptures shows the continuity of the Nātha tradition in this region.

(From Fig. 83 to Fig. 90 are the images representing the performance of Siṅganātha practice of the Nātha-Siddhas)

Fig. 83: This sculpture is found in a *ardhamaṇḍapa* pillar of Bāhūr Śrī Mūlanātha temple in which a Nātha-Siddha is shown blowing the deer horn. He is standing in a striding posture and slightly bent forward; with both of his hands he is holding the deer horn in his mouth. He is wearing big *kuṇḍalas*, rings on his wrists, anklets on his legs, cross bands on his chest and *laṅgōti*, etc.

Fig. 84: This sculpture is found in a *maṇḍapa* pillar of Kāmāṭchi Amman temple at Kāñcipuram. A *Nāthapanthi* is standing erect and holding the deer horn in his right hand to its mouth and his left hand is hanging in a *lōla-hastamudra*. He is also found with wearing the appendages like other Nātha-Siddhas, viz., matted hair, big *kuṇḍala*, and rings in arms and wrists, cross bands and medallion. But instead of *laṅgōti*, it seems to be a patched garment.

Fig. 85: This sculpture is found in the *adhistāna* of the *vāhana maṇḍapa* of the Lower Ahobilam temple in the Kurnūl dist. of Āndhra Pradesh. He is standing in a *tribhaṅga* pose, whose left leg is striding forward and left hand is holding the deer horn to his mouth. His right leg bent slightly and his right hand is placed on his right thigh. His hairdo, *kuṇḍala*, medallion, *laṅgōti* are clearly depicted, even though his face is not clearly visible due to the structure of the stone it made up of.

Fig.86: This sculpture is found in the *mukhamanḍapa* pillar of the Bhōganandīśvara temple in Karnāṭaka, in which the Nātha-Siddha is in a *tribhaṅga* pose striding and facing towards right. He is holding the deer horn in his left hand to his mouth and his right hand is bent upwards. His left leg is bent forward and his right leg bent backward. His matted hair, necklace like ornament, rings on his wrists, *kuṇḍala* and *laṅgōti* are clearly depicted. Many other sculptures of the same kind are found in this temple.

Fig.87: This sculpture is found in the *mukhamanḍapa* pillar of the Sōmēśvara temple at Ulsūr, Karnāṭaka. A Nāthapanthi seated in a squatting pose in *Upavesāsana* and holding the deer horn in his right hand to his mouth. His left hand is resting on his left leg. His matted hairs, *kuṇḍala*, necklace like ornament; rings on his wrists, anklets, *laṅgōti* are clearly depicted. He is also depicted with big belly.

Fig.88: In another sculpture found in the *mukhamanḍapa* of the Sōmēśvara temple, an Nātha-Siddha in a *tribhaṅga* pose, holding the deer horn in his both hands to his mouth. Both his legs are slightly bent down. His hairdo, long *kuṇḍala*, rings in wrists, anklets and *laṅgōti* are clearly visible.

Fig. 89: This sculpture is found on a top relief of an *ardhamanḍapa* pillar of Villiaṅūr temple, in which an Nātha-Siddha holding a deer horn in his mouth with both hands towards right side. His matted hair, *kuṇḍala*, rings in his wrists and arms; anklets are engraved clearly. Many sculptures of this similar kind are also found in other parts of this temple.

Fig. 90: This sculpture is found in the eastern *manḍapa* pillar of the Viruthagirīśvara temple at Virudhāchalam of Tamiḷnāḍu. He is found with a similar pose found in Villiaṅūr temple (Fig.89). This *manḍapa* belongs to the post Vijayanagara period. Rounded matted hair, *kuṇḍala*, cross bands, rings in wrists; patched garments in his under waist are clearly depicted. Besides above, similar sculptures are also found in almost all medieval temples of Karnāṭaka, Āṇdhra Pradesh and Tamiḷnāḍu.

Fig. 91: This sculpture is found on the *prakāra* wall of Śrisailam temple. A Siddha is depicted as seated on a long *yōga-daṇḍa* in a *padmāsana* pose and his head and body is fully bent towards his right side. His both hands are raised and joined together in *añjali mudrā*. His matted hair and big *kuṇḍala*, a wallet in his left arm are clearly visible. Besides, a tree and under him, two monkeys are shown to depict the forest scenery.

Fig. 92: This sculpture found in the *mukhamanḍapa* pillar of the Bhōganandīśvara temple at Karnāṭaka. He is seated in an *ardha-padmāsana* pose, as his right left is folded upward. His left hand is resting on his left thigh. His right hand is on his right leg knee and his face is resting on his right hand palm. His matted hair, big medallion in his chest, rings in his wrists and arms, anklets in his legs are clearly depicted.

Fig. 93: This sculpture is found in the same *manḍapa* of Nandi temple in which he is depicted seated in *ardha-padmāsana* pose with his left leg slightly elevated upward and both body and head bent towards his left. His both hands raised above his head in *añjali mudrā*. A wallet in right shoulder, a deer horn medallion in his chest with cross bands, *laṅgōti*, rings in his wrists and arms; and anklets in his legs are depicted clearly and

purposefully. Many similar sculptures of this kind is also found in other pillars of this temple, as well as other temples of south India like, Śrisailam, Hazara Rāma temple at Hampi and other temples of Tamiḷnāḍu, Karnāṭaka and Āndhra Pradesh.

Fig. 94: This sculpture is also found in the same temple in which he is seated in *ardha-padmāsana* pose as his left leg raised upward. His left hand is in his left leg knee and his right hand is raised upward in a *hamsapakṣa mudrā* as his palm opened. He is found with tonsured head, big *kuṇḍala*, and medallion on his chest, rings on his arms and wrists, anklets on his legs and *laṅgōti* are depicted.

Fig. 95: In this sculpture, in the *mukhamāṇḍapa* pillar of Nandi temple, a *Nāthapanthi* is depicted in *ardha-padmāsana* pose as his left leg folded upward in which his left hand is resting in a *daṇḍa-hasta mudrā* and his right hand is resting on his right thigh in a *katya valambita mudrā*. His matted hair, *kuṇḍala*, necklace like ornament with medallion, rings in his arms and wrists, anklets in his legs are clearly sculpted.

Fig. 96: This sculpture is found on the bottom of a pillar in the *ardhamāṇḍapa* of Yōganandīśvara temple at Nandibeta in Karnāṭaka. He is seated in *padmāsana*. He is holding a *yōga-daṇḍa* placed in front of him, in his left hand and keeping his right hand on the top of it and resting his chin. He is having a big bunch of matted hair folded on either side of his head. He is wearing big *kuṇḍala* patched garment in his shoulder, rings in his arms and wrists and anklet in his legs.

Fig. 97: This sculpture is found in a pillar of Rāmaliṅgēśvara temple at Āvani of Karnāṭaka. A Siddha is found with a tonsured head. He is seated in an *ardha-padmāsana* pose as his left leg folded upward and he is holding his left hand on its knee in a *lōla-hasta mudrā*, and his head is bent towards left and resting on the left hand. His right hand is in a *kaṅgula (dhyāni) mudrā*, resting in his right foot. He is wearing a *rudrākṣamāla* around his head, and a big one is hanging from his shoulder to stomach. He is also wearing a necklace like ornament; a big ring like ornament in his wrists and arms, his *laṅgōti* is also clearly depicted. But instead of usual ear-ring (*kuṇḍala*), the ear lobe in him is looking differently in a big size *rudrākṣa* seeds.

Fig. 98: This sculpture is found in one of the sanctum pillar of the Rāmaliṅgēśvara temple at Āvani. He is seated in a *paryāṅkāsana* pose, whose right leg is folded and placed upon his left leg. His left hand is resting down in a *katya valambita mudrā* and his right hand is resting in a *daṇḍa-hasta* pose on his right leg knee. His face is slightly lifted upward. His matted hair, big *kuṇḍalas*, necklace like ornament, medallion on his chest, rings on his arms and wrists are depicted as the common features of the *Nāthapanthis*.

Fig. 99: This sculpture is found on the outer wall of the *ardhamāṇḍapa* of Āvani temple. He is standing in a *Vrkṣāsana* pose in his left leg and his right leg is folded and resting on his left thigh. His left hand is placed on the right leg foot in a *dhyāni/kaṅgula mudrā*, and his right hand is placed on the top of his head. He is depicted with long hair which is hanging broadly up to the ground from his head. Big *kuṇḍala*, medallion and *rudrākṣmāla* in his chest, rings on his arms are also depicted.

Fig. 100: This sculpture is found in the *ardhamanḍapa* pillar of Bāhūr temple, in which a Siddha is seated in a squatting pose. His both legs are crossed together in *svastikāsana* and tied with the *yōga-paṭṭa*. Both his hands are hanging in *danḍa-hasta mudrā* and resting in his respective knees. He is depicted with a matted hair, beard, rings on his arms and wrists.

Fig. 101: This sculpture is found in a small *kudu* of an *adhistāna* in the Lower Ahobilam temple. It is less than one feet in its height. He is seated in a *padmāsana* pose. His both hands are resting on a *yōga-danḍa*, which is placed in his front, and on that his chin is also resting. He is found with tonsured head and his long *kuṇḍalas* and a ring on his wrists are clearly visible.

Fig. 102: Another miniature sculpture is found in the same row of the above temple (Fig.101), in which he is seated in a *svastikāsana* pose. His both legs are tied with *yōga-paṭṭa*, and he is holding those legs with his respective hands. His matted hair, long *kuṇḍala*, thick rings on his arms, deer horn medallion on his chest is clearly depicted in it.

Fig. 103: This sculpture is found on the pillar relief of the Lower Ahobilam temple, which is found similar to the Fig.101. But in this, the *yōga-danḍa* is placed on his foot, he is having big *kuṇḍala*, his head is with a knotted hairdo and a *kamaṇḍala* is also placed besides his left hand.

Fig. 104: This is found in another pillar relief of the Lower Ahobilam temple. He is seated in an *ardha-padmāsana* pose, facing towards his left. His left leg is folded upward and his left hand is resting on it in a *lōla-hasta mudrā*. His right hand is placed, besides his right leg in a *katya valambita mudrā*. He is with big matted hairs; wearing large *kuṇḍala*, cross bands and a medallion of deer horn in his chest, rings in his hands are clearly sculpted.

Fig. 105: This sculpture is found in the entrance *gōpura* wall of the Upper Ahobilam temple. It is similar to the Fig. 101 and 103. But, he is depicted as with good physical structure. His matted hair, a long ring like ear lobe and *laṅgōti* in his hip, are more attractively sculpted.

Fig. 106: This sculpture is found in one of the *manḍapa* pillars located to the south of the sanctum of the Bhūmīśvaramudaiyār temple at Marakāṇam in Tamiḷnādu. In this a Siddha is seated in an *ardha-padmāsana* pose. His body is bent towards his right side and his head is resting on his right hand, which is already resting on a *yōga-danḍa* that placed to his right side. His left hand is holding his right hand. His matted hair and big *kuṇḍala*, a wallet in his left shoulder are depicted in this sculpture.

Fig. 107: This sculpture is found on the *vasantha-manḍapa* pillar of the same temple (Fig.106). He is seated in an *ardha-padmāsana* pose as his right leg folded upward in which his both hands are resting together and his chin is resting on his hands. Rounded matted hair, big *kuṇḍala*, a medallion in his chest and a wallet in his left arm are clearly sculpted.

Fig. 108: This sculpture is found on the bottom of a *mukhamāṇḍapa* pillar of Raṅganātha temple at Kāramadai of Coimbatore dist. of Tamiḷnāḍu. He is depicted in a *Upavesāsana* (squatting pose) and his hands are in *daṇḍa-hasta mudrā*, as similar to Fig.100. Along with the above said appendages, his hair is found to be longer which touches the ground.

Fig. 109: This sculpture is found in *ardhamāṇḍapa* of Kōṭe Veṅkatēśvara Perumal temple near Tipu Palace in Bangalore. He is depicted as similarly as in Fig.100. Besides, his big *kuṇḍala*, neck ornaments and other appendages are clearly sculpted than the above said one.

Fig. 110: This sculpture is found in one of the *maṇḍapa* pillars of the Śrīraṅgam temple. A Siddha is mounted on a hill in a *lalitāsana* pose. His right hand is in *chin mudrā* and his right leg is folded upward and is tied with *yōga-paṭṭa* from his hip. His left leg is hanging on the hill, and in its' thigh, his left hand is resting. He is depicted with long hairs, having beard, wearing *rudrākṣamāla* in his neck and rings on his arms and wrists.

Fig. 111: This temple is found in one of the *maṇḍapa* pillars of Śrīraṅgam temple, in which a Siddha is in a *Vrksāsana* pose standing in his left leg and his right is folded and resting on his left leg. His hands are raised above his head in an *añjali mudrā*. Instead of beard, he is depicted with a long moustache. He is having a long hair and wearing rings on his arms and wrists. He is also wearing a *laṅgōti*.

Fig. 112: This sculpture is found on the top of the pillar in the sanctum of the Ucchipillaiyar temple, which is located on the hilltop in Tiruchy. He is seated in a *padmāsana* posture and his hands are raised above his head in an *añjali mudrā*. He is having long hair in his head; wearing big *kuṇḍala* his ears and a *laṅgōti*.

Fig. 113: This sculpture is also found in the above temple (Fig.112), in which a Siddha is seated in an *ardha-padmāsana* pose. His left leg is folded upward and tied with a *yōga-paṭṭa* from his hip. His left hand is in *lōla-hasta* pose resting on the left knee. His right hand is in *abhaya-mudrā*. He is having long hair, wearing *rudrākṣamāla* in his neck and chest, rings on his arms and anklets.

Fig. 114: This sculpture is found in the entrance *maṇḍapa* pillar of the Ucchipillaiyār temple at Trichy, which is looking similar to Fig.110, and his postures are as depicted in Fig. 113. A *rudrākṣamāla* is rounded around his forehead, and he is wearing a *rudrākṣmāla* in his chest and in his arms; and anklet in his legs.

Fig. 115: This sculpture is found in the Nandi *maṇḍapa* pillar of Tañjāvūr Brahadeśvara temple. He is in a *Vrksāsana* pose, standing on his left leg and his right leg is folded to his left thigh. His hands raised above his head as he is in *añjali mudrā*. He is having long hair, big *kuṇḍala* and anklets.

Fig. 116: This sculpture is found in the *mukhamāṇḍapa* of the Tiruvotriyūr Śiva temple. He is in a *Vrksāsana* pose, standing in his left leg and his right leg is folded upward to his naval. His both hands are raised above his head. He is having long hairs, his *kuṇḍala* and *laṅgōti* is also visible clearly. Similarly many other sculptures of this same kind are also found in other pillars of this temple.

Fig. 117: This rare sculpture is found in the inside wall of the southern *gōpura* of Villiaṇūr temple. In this a Siddha is standing in a *Vrkśāsana* pose in his right leg and his left leg is folded upward to his right thigh. He is holding a *ēka tārā vīna* (*kiṇṇjuri*?) in his hands. His matted hairs, *kuṇḍala*, medallion on his chest are also clearly sculpted. Though a similar kind of sculpture is found in the *adhistaṇa* of the *vāhana maṇḍapa* of Lower Ahobilam temple, instead of *Vrkśāsana* pose, he is depicted in *pārśvottānāsana* pose.

Fig. 118: This sculpture is found in the north side of the southern *gōpura* of Villiaṇūr temple. In this a *Nāthapanthi* is seated on a long *yōga-daṇḍa* in a *pariyaṅgāsana* pose. His right hand is resting in a *daṇḍa-hasta* pose on his right leg knee. In his left hand, he is holding a fly whisk like staff. He is wearing the similar appendages as found in the Fig. 24 and Fig.49 such as a medallion of deer horn in his chest, big *kuṇḍala*, matted hair and a wallet in his left arm.

Fig. 119: This sculpture is also found in the above place (in Fig.118). He is seated on the top of the *yōga-daṇḍa* in a squatting pose (*Upavesāsana*) with cross legs (*svastikāsana*) which are tied with a *yōga-paṭṭa*, and his both hands are hanging down by resting on their respective knees in a *daṇḍa-hasta mudrā*. His matted hair and other appendages are clearly visible in this sculpture.

Fig. 120: This sculpture is found on the *ardhamanḍapa* pillar of the Villiaṇūr temple. In this the *Nātha-Siddha* is depicted as he is standing in cross legs and his hands are in *Gaṇēśa mudrā* as they rose above his head, whose index fingers are folded together. His matted hair, deer horn medallion, a wallet in his left shoulder, rings in his arms and wrists, his *laṅgōti* are the common features of the *Nāthapanthis*.

Fig. 121: A similar sculpture is found in the same temple is depicted in *Gaṇēśa mudrā* as shown above in Fig.120. It is found inside the *ardhamanḍapa*, nearer to the sanctum of the temple. But it is depicted as he is wearing a *yōga-paṭṭa* under his both thighs.

Fig. 122: This sculpture is found in the eastern *maṇḍapa* pillar of the Virudhāchalam temple. In this, he is standing in a *pārśvottānāsana* pose with his legs widened apart in a *tribhaṅga* pose, and his hands are raised above his head in *Gaṇēśa mudrā* as his left hand is holding his right hand wrist. He is having matted hairs, patched garment in his shoulder and in under waist. A big wallet is hanging in his left shoulder.

Fig. 123: This sculpture is found in another pillar of the Virudhāchalam temple, in which he standing in a *tribhaṅga* posture as his both legs widening apart as like in *pārśvottānāsana* poses. His left leg is slightly bent down and his left hand is resting on his left thigh. He is holding a *kattuvāṅga* (club) in his right hand and a wallet is also tied on his right shoulder. His matted hair, *kuṇḍala*, patched garment on his chest, and *laṅgōti* are clearly depicted.

Fig. 124: This sculpture is found in the *mukhamanḍapa* pillar of the Sōmēśvara temple, Ulsūr. He is seated in a *Upavesāsana* (squatting pose) as seen in Fig.102. His legs are crossed and tied with *yōga-paṭṭa*, and his hands folded as his palms are resting on respective knees. He is having long hairs and he is wearing a *rudrākṣamāla* in his neck.

Fig. 125: This sculpture is found in the *mukhamaṇḍapa* pillar of the Ulsūr temple. He is seated in an *ardha-padmāsana* pose. His left leg is slightly folded-up and his left hand is resting on it. His right hand is resting on his right thigh in *katya valambita mudrā*. Unlike other examples, a wallet is tied in his left hand wrist. Matted hair, cross bands in chest, *kuṇḍala*, rings on his hands are also found.

Fig. 126: This sculpture is found in the bottom of an entrance pillar of Kalāsipālayam temple. He is seated in *svasthikāsana* with crossed legs. His long matted hair, *kuṇḍala*, rings on his arms and wrists, anklets on his leg, a wallet on his right shoulder, *rudrākṣamāla* on his chest and a *kamaṇḍala* to his left side are beautifully sculpted.

Fig. 127: This sculpture is also found in the entrance pillar of the Jalakantēśvara temple at Kalāsipālayam. In this a *Nāthapanthi* is depicted standing with his legs wide apart in a *tribhaṅga* pose. His left hand is resting on his left thigh and his right hand is rising upward. Along with his knotted hairdo, big *kuṇḍalas* in ears, cross bands on his chest, rings on his wrists and arms, and a *laṅgōti* are depicted. Interestingly, as seen above in Fig. 125, he is found with a wallet tied to his left shoulder.

Fig. 128: This sculpture is found in Kalāsipālayam temple in which a *Nāthapanthi* is seated in *ardha-padmāsana* pose. His left leg is slightly raised upward and his left hand knee is resting on it and on which, the Siddha is resting his head which is bent slightly towards his left side. His knotted hairdo, big *kuṇḍalas*, ornaments in his neck and chest, rings on his arms and wrists and his *laṅgōti* are depicted clearly as the usual appendages of the *Nāthapanthis*.

**(From Fig.129 to Fig.138, all are found in the outer prakāra pillars of the
Ādikēśava Perumal temple at Tiruvattāru in Kaṇṇiyākumari dist. of Tamiḷnāḍu)**

Fig. 129: This sculpture is found in the outer *prakāra maṇḍapa* of Tiruvattāru temple. A Siddha is seated in a *Dwi-pāda Sirasāsana*, in which he lifted upward both of his legs above his head and his hands are in *añjali mudrā*. His secret parts are shown as clearly visible. His hair is knotted and he is with a beard. Above his head an *aṣṭatala padma* is depicted.

Fig. 130: In this sculpture, he is seated on a mount in a *daṇḍa-hasta mudrā*, which is similar to the Figs. 110 and 114. But his seating posture is similar to Fig.119. His hair is knotted and he is having beard and an *aṣṭatala padma* is also depicted above his head.

Fig. 131: In this sculpture, a Siddha is depicted performing *ūrdhva padmāsana* in *Sirisāna*, as his body shown upside down and his hands are placed on the ground holding together in *Gaṇēśa mudrā*. On his hands, his head is resting and his legs are folded upwards in *padmāsana*. He is having beard, *rudrākṣamāla* in his neck, rings on his arms etc.

Fig. 132: In this sculpture, he is carrying a *liṅga* in his right hand holding his long erect penis in his left hand. His hairs are knotted and rounded with a *rudrākṣamāla*. He is also shown with beard.

Fig. 133: In this sculpture, he is shown standing in *Vrkśāsana*(?) with his right leg crossed on his left leg. His both hands are raised upward and holding each other in *Gaṇēśa mudrā*. He is having long hair, beard, wearing a *laṅgōti*, rings on his hands and anklets on his legs. Above his head an *aṣṭatāla padmā* is depicted and to his left a serpent is shown as it is rising upward.

Fig. 134: In this a Siddha is standing in a *pārśvottāsana* as his legs are wide apart along with his erect penis. He appears to be older in age whose face is shrunk. He is shown with a beard, long hair on his back. He is indicating with his right index finger the *mūlādhāra* and showing his left hand above his head.

Fig. 135 to Fig. 137: in this sculpture, the *yōgic* practitioner in a *pārśvottāsana* is shown as he is holding his erect penis in his left hand and showing his right hand index finger on his head where the *sahasrāra* is located. He is shown with long hair, big moustache, and a medallion on his chest.

Fig. 136: This sculpture is same as Fig.135 and 137 in which he is in a *pārśvottāsana*. But on his left side a snake is shown as it is rising upward. Thus from the above representations, we may think that these sculptures clearly depict the practice of *kuṇḍaliṇi yōga*, in which the snake is shown for the raising of *kuṇḍaliṇi* and the fingers indicating the lower part of the body (buttocks) – the starting point of the *kuṇḍaliṇi* power and also the top of the head where the *sahasrāra*, the final destination point of the *kuṇḍaliṇi* is. Many sculptures of this same kind are found in the same *prakāra* of this temple as well as in the Tāṇumālaya Perumal temple a Sucīndram in Kaṇṇiyākumari dist. of Tamiḷnāḍu.

Fig. 138: In this sculpture, a Siddha appears to be an aged person and is in *pārśvottāsana* in *tribhaṅga* pose, with his body slightly bent forward. He is shown with his erect penis. He is having long beard and hair, and also a wallet tied to his left arm.

Fig. 139: This sculpture is found on the ceiling beam of the *Puthumaṇḍapa* of Tiruvotriyūr Śiva temple. In this, a male figure he is depicted with *sat-cakras* in the respective places of his body starting from *mūlādhāra* to *Sahasrāra*. Below his feet the moon (*ida*) is shown and above the head the Sun is shown (*pīṅgala*). Though it seems to be of a later period, this kind of sculptures are a rare.

From **Fig. 140 to Fig. 147**, all are found in an ithyphallic pose in different standing postures, found in different temples. Of these, Fig. 140 to Fig. 143 are found in the outer *prakāra* pillars of the Tiruvattāru temple. All of these Siddhas are shown with their erected penis in different *yōgic* postures. Except Fig. 144 and Fig. 145, all are shown in a *pārśvottāsana* pose. In Fig. 140, he raised his hands upwards above his head in *añjali mudrā*. In Fig. 144, he bents his body slightly backward and his hands are raised above his head in a *Gaṇēśa mudrā*, in which his left hand holding his right hand. An *aṣṭatāla padmā* is also depicted above him. Though, in Fig. 142 and 143, his hands are above his head in also in *Gaṇēśa mudrā*, in these sculptures his right hand is holding his left hand.

Fig. 144: This sculpture is found in the *ardhamāṇḍapa* pillar of Bāhūr Mūlanātha temple, in which a Siddha is depicted in an ithyphallic pose. He is shown nude and his penis erect. He is in a *Tādāsana* pose and his hands are raised above his head in *añjali mudrā*.

He is having long hair, big moustache and beard. (*Interestingly, while taking this photograph, coincidently a devotee is also standing behind this pillar and worshipping with his hands raised above his head in añjali mudrā in front of the sanctum*).

Fig. 145: This sculpture is found in the southern *maṇḍapa* pillar of the Raṅganātha temple at Śrīraṅgam. In this a Siddha is in *Tādāsana* pose, whose virile membrane is shown as erected. His hands are raised above his head in *añjali mudrā*. Above his forehead may be a bald one, but a long hair is shown from his backside of the head.

Fig. 146: This sculpture is found in the entrance pillar of the Perumal temple at Tirupathisāram, in Tirunelveli Dist. of Tamiḷnāḍu. He is standing in in a *pārśvottāsana* pose as his legs wide apart and his right leg is little forward. His hands are raised above his head and joined together with coiled index fingers in *Gaṇēśa mudrā*. He is wearing a *rudrākṣamāla* in his head, neck and on his arms.

Fig. 147: This sculpture is found in the northern entrance of a Viṣṇu temple at Āranmula in Kerala. It is in the same form as Fig. 146.

Fig. 148 to Fig. 161 are the depictions of *Bhairavi Cakra/Cakra Pūjā practice of the Tāntric cult*. Usually in sculptures, the practice of *Bhairavi Cakra* is always depicted with a group of male tantric practitioners who are lesser in height than the woman and standing in a nude pose with or holding their erect virile membrane (penis) in their hand. And they are in *añjali mudrā*, in front of or at the legs of the gigantic nude women, (hereafter called as *Bhairavi*), who is showing her secret parts in a standing pose. However, there are slight differences in those depictions in each place. Sometimes the male practitioners may be four or less in numbers and even one also.

Fig. 148: This sculpture is found in the *prakāra* wall of the Śrīsailam temple, in which the *Bhairavi* is nude and sitting in a squatting pose (*upavesāsana*) by showing her secret parts. Surrounding her, the tantric practitioners are in *añjali mudrā* with erect penis. Interestingly, in this panel, a Siddha is shown seated with *yōga-paṭṭa*, as the guide those practitioners. Except this panel, almost in all the panels of this *Cakra Pūjā*, *Bhairavi* is depicted in a standing posture.

Fig. 149: This panel is found on the top of a *maṇḍapa* in the Kalmaṇḍapam village of Pudukhērry. The village is also named after this *maṇḍapa*, which is belongs to the Vijayanagara period. In this *maṇḍapa*, there are a series of panels depicting different kinds of religious practices of which *Bhairavi Cakra* is also one. In this a nude women is standing in a *varada mudrā* and other practitioners in *añjali mudrā*, and one of them is kneeling down at her feet.

Fig. 150: This sculpture is found on the pillar of the Kōte Venkatēśvara temple at Bangalore, in which a devotee in *añjali mudrā* and standing behind the nude lady who is depicted taller than the practitioners. Her right hand is resting on her right thigh and her left hand is in *suchi (Tarjani) mudrā*.

Fig. 151: This sculpture is found in the northern *maṇḍapa* of the Śrīraṅgam temple. One can find numerous sculptures of this same kind in this *maṇḍapa*. In this, two practitioners

are depicted as they are worshipping her, and she is holding the *Suchi mudrā* with her right hand and left hand is resting on her left thigh.

Fig. 152: This sculpture is found in a *maṇḍapa* located in front of the sanctum of the Tiruvattāru temple. In this panel, a single practitioner in nude with his erect penis is shown behind the *Bhairavi*, who is standing and whose legs are crossed. She is shown nude with her big pudenda and her other secrets parts. He is in *añjali mudrā* and wearing the *rudrākṣamāla*. More than fifty representations of (with some differences) of this *Bhairavi Cakra* are found in this temple as well as in the *Tāṇumālaya* temple at Sucindram in Kāṇṇiyākumari district.

Fig. 153: This sculpture is found in the entrance *maṇḍapa* of the Ēkāmbarēśvara temple at Kāñcipuram of Tamiḷnādu. More than usual, here *Bhairavi* is depicted in *Vrkśāsana* pose and in *añjali mudrā* in a nude form. Under her, two practitioners are depicted; one is kneeling down to her feet and another one is standing and just bent towards her by holding his erect penis in his both hands. His hairdo is similar with the hair style found in the Fig.60. He is wearing *rudrākṣamāla* in his neck and arms; and both are found with the beard.

Fig. 154: This sculpture is found on a pillar in front of the main sanctum of Kāmāṭchiamman Temple at Kāñcipuram. In this a single practitioner is standing with his erect penis and holding his right hand towards the pudenda of the *Bhairavi*. His ornaments and hairdo are similar to the Fig.153. Here *Bhairavi* is shown in *dwibhaṅga* pose and lifted up her right hand above her head and her left hand is freely hanging in the *lōla-hasta mudrā*.

Fig. 155: This sculpture is found in the pillared hall of the Varadarāja Perumal temple at Kāñjipuram. In this four nude practitioners are standing on the either side of *Bhairavi*, with their erect penis. Of them, one is kneeling down to her feet. The coiffure of the *Bhairavi* is in the late Nāyaka style. She is also nude and her left hand is hanging freely in *lōla-hasta mudrā* and her right hand is broken, but it may be in the *suchi mudrā*.

Fig. 156: This sculpture is found in the *mukhamaṇḍapa* pillar of the Tirukalukunṇam Murugaṇ temple. In this *Bhairavi* is depicted as taller and her left hand is in *suchi* (*Tarjani*) *mudrā*. Her right hand is placed on her right thigh and her fingers slightly hide her secret part. Under her are shown, two practitioners with erect penis, one in *añjali mudrā* and another one holding his penis in his hand.

Fig. 157: It is similar to the above (Fig.156) sculpture. In this two practitioners are found under the nude *Bhairavi*. She is standing nude and her right hand is in *suchi* or *Tarjani mudrā* and her left hand is placed on her left thigh and her fingers almost hiding her pudenda. Her coiffure appears to a late Vijayanagara style.

Fig. 158: This sculpture is found in the inner wall of the southern *gōpura* of Villiaṇūr temple. Similar panels on twenty occasions depict the same scene in other parts of this temple. In this sculpture *Bhairavi* is depicted with her right hand in *Tarjani/Suchi mudrā* and her left hand is resting her left thigh. Five practitioners are standing on her either side.

Of them two are kneeling down to her feet on both sides and others are in a nude pose with erect penis in *añjali mudrā*.

Fig. 159: This stucco sculpture is found on the northern side of the *vimāna* of the *Pañcanaḍīśvara* temple at Tiruvaṇḍārkōil. In this two practitioners are depicted along with the nude *Bhairavi*. One is in an *upavesāsana* (squatting) pose and holding his penis in his right hand and right leg of the *Bhairavi* in his left hand. Another practitioner is in *añjali mudrā* standing behind her with his erect penis.

Fig. 160: This stucco sculpture is found in the entrance *gōpura* of the Tirumeyyam temple at Pudukōṭṭai dist. of Tamiḷnādu. In this, the nude *Bhairavi* is depicted in a *varada mudrā* with her right hand and her left hand is resting in her left thigh. Two practitioners are depicted on either side with erect penis. One is holding his penis in his right hand and keeping his left hand on his head. Another one is in *lalitāsana* and holding his penis in his both hands. Both are found with beard, *rudrākṣamāla*, etc.

Fig. 161: This sculpture is found on the second tier of the entrance *gōpura* of the Tirukaṇṇamaṅgai Śrī Bhakthavatchala Perumal temple of Kumbakōṇam dist. of Tamiḷnādu. It is the depiction of the *Bhairavi Cakra* in a polished way as all their secret parts are covered with dresses viz. *laṅgōṭi* for male and a half-sari for female. Here the *Bhairavi* is depicted in *varadha mudrā* and a practitioner under her is seems to receive something from her and one is found with *añjali mudrā*. Since it is Vaiṣṇava temple, all of them are shown with Vaiṣṇavite symbols in their forehead.

Fig. 162: This stucco sculpture is found in same place (Fig.161), in which Mīṇanātha is seated on a fish in *lalitāsana* and holding the breast of a woman who is standing to his left. In turn, she is holding his hair with her left hand; and holding his left hand by her right hand. This seems to be the depiction of ‘Kadali’ part of the stories on Mīṇanātha. To their right side another siddha kneeling down under *Bhairavi*, as he is holding her breast in his right hand. To their right side another Siddha also kneeling down under the lady who is in *lalitāsana* pose and removing a snake which seems to be licking her pudenda. He may be the Gōrakṣanātha, who came to rescue his *guru* Mīṇanātha, in the above legend. Instead of horizontal *Tripundra* (of Śaiva sects) in their forehead, all are depicted with the Vaiṣṇavite symbols of vertical *Tripundra*.

Fig. 163: This shrine found in the premises of Abirāmi temple at Tirukadavūr in the Kumbakōṇam dist. of Tamiḷnādu. It is said that Siddha Pulasthiyar worshipped the *liṅga* in this shrine.

Chapter IV

SIDDHA CULT IN TAMILNĀDU ITS HISTORY AND HISTORICAL CONTINUITY

As discussed in the previous chapter, the Natha Siddha cult and tradition became popular during the medieval period as a pan-Indian tradition including the Tamil region¹. In fact, the tradition of the *Siddhāchāryās* is a part of a larger āgamic, *tāntric* and *yōgic* tradition of India, coming from all four corners of the country such as Tamilnādu, Maharashtra, Kaśmir and Bengal; as revealed by a vast body of literary production² of the Tamil *Siddhas*, the *nāth yōgīs*, the *Vaiṣṇava sahajiyās*, and the *bāuls* respectively in their vernacular languages namely Tamil, Marathi, Kashmiri and Bengali, between the 10th - 17th centuries C.E.

Another common feature found among them is that they did not view the Supreme as an object of worship but as a living presence within. Instead of scriptures, they relied on human *gurus* or the inner conscience as a guide; instead of ritual or worship, they emphasised practices that opened the way to mystical experience. Since they viewed the Godhead as a principle within them, they gave a good deal of importance to the body, which they regarded both as a vessel of divinity and a means for its attainment³. They promoted the practices like *prāṇāyāma*, and to some extent the esoteric sexuality. They perfected their physical body as an instrument of progress to achieve their spiritual goal. To them salvation is not a freedom after death or while living in a body doomed to die, but perfection in an immortal body (*Siddha dēha*). Therefore, many of them experimented with alchemy and in seeking of supernatural powers, popularly known as *Aṣṭa siddhis*. By totally renouncing their conventional life, these Siddhas wandered in many places and transmitted their teachings through simple and colloquial verses or songs. The central themes of their songs are in mystical sense drawn from daily life of the common people, but mostly in twilight language, which should be understood only by the initiates³.

¹ The Siddhas are generally classified into Nātha Siddhas, Rasa Siddhas, Mahēśvara Siddhas and Saṅgata Siddhas. The Rasa Siddhas are medicine men while the Saṅgata Siddhas are the Buddhist Siddhas. Besides, the *yōgācārā* school of *Tāntric* Buddhism another sect with an account of 84 Buddhist *Siddhāchāryās* emerged as its offshoot.

² Peter Heehs (ed.), *Indian Religions: The Spiritual Traditions of South-Asia – Anthology*, Permanent Black, New Delhi, 2002, p. 281

³ *Ibid*, p. 282

Their teachings are all socio-centric and human centric and preached the necessity of harmonious living to form an egalitarian society. They frequently raised the voice against the caste distinctions and social inequalities. They rebelled against the traditional practices and confronted the established religious and social organizations. They rejected the meaningless rituals, ceremonies, ridiculed the blind beliefs and selfish motives behind them. As free thinkers they were not dogmatic and text bound, but rational in their outlook. In the real sense, they treated the whole humankind as one clan and as theists they advocated the concept of monotheism (*onrē kulam- oruvaṇē dēvaṇ*)⁴. But their spiritual aim was the realization of the oneness of individual self (microcosm, or *piṇḍa*) with the universal self (macrocosm, or *aṇḍa*); through their physical and spiritual exercises. For that they practiced the *Kuṇḍalini yōga and haṭha Yōga* and are considered to be renowned *jñānis* or supreme mystics by their *yōgic* practices. They transcended all existing empirical limits of the physical or psychological planes and completely withdrew from the society. Since these Siddhas are more concerned about the physical, mental and moral life of the lay people, they delivered their messages and experiences to the public, which they gained from deep meditation and realization, which helped them to lead a harmonious life. Their boundless compassion and social concern was revealed through a vast body of literary output preserved in the form of palm leaf manuscripts, on medicine, *yōga*, philosophy, ethics, alchemy and science. Besides, they were custodians of our ancient sciences such as biology, medicine, alchemy, architecture, astronomy, etc⁵.

Kamil V. Zvelebil says that the Tamiḷ Siddha cult is “one of the most important and interesting off-shoots of the pan-Indian *Tāntric Yōga* movement”⁶. During 19th-20th centuries, the scholars who listed out the ‘Tamiḷ Siddhas’ or the Siddhas of the Dravidian country appears to have been confused in numbering them, whom to add and whom to avoid, because of the lack of knowledge about the appearance, characters, qualities, or common definitions of Siddhas. As a result we have many lists of ‘Eighteen Siddhas’, and even more. Besides, the persons who

⁴ *Tirumandiram*, verse 2066, South Indian Śaiva Siddhānta Works publishing Society, Tinnevely, 2007 (rep.), p.823.

⁵ S.N. Kandaswamy, *The Yoga of Siddha Avvai*, Kriya Yoga Publications, Cannada, 2004, pp. 2-4

⁶ Kamil V. Zvelebil, *The Poets of the Powers*, Rider & Co, London, 1973, p.16; (hencefore *The Poets*) see also Mircea Eliade, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*, p.304.

developed the stories of the Siddhas mostly borrowed from the Tibetan and Buddhist sources and applied them in the descriptions of the Tamil Siddhas. One interesting aspect in this is that many of names of the Buddhist Siddhācāryās and Navanāthas are found either with the same name or in corrupted form in the different lists of the Tamil Siddhas. Most of the persons who were all engaged in Siddha-medicine or herbal medical practices are not Siddhas in real. But they are considered to be, and called by common people as Siddhas. In fact, the personalities like Vyāghrapādar and Patañjali are not included in the list of Siddhas, but they were celebrated as experts of *yōga*. Besides, the doctors or physicians who wrote *ĀyūrVēdic* medical treatises was also not included in the list or not called as Siddhas.

Traditional groups of the Tamil Siddhas

Seen from a historical perspective, at least three groups of thinkers bear the designation of Siddha in Tamil culture:⁷

- 1) A group of alchemists and physicians who have constituted the indigenous school of medicine, and composed a (probably vast) number of alchemical and medical treatises, as yet almost unknown to outsiders, whether Indian or non-Indian. This group constitutes the *citta vaittiyaṁ* or ‘Siddhas medicine’ and *citta racavāṭam* or ‘Siddha alchemy’ such as Nandi (Nandikēśvarar), Agattiyar, Tirumūlar, Śivavākkīar, Gōrakhar, Koṇkaṇar, Bōgar, Daṇvaṇtri, Pulippāṇi, Tēraiyyar, Karuvūrār, Kālaṅgi etc.
- 2) A group of esoteric poets who have composed a large volume of poetry in Tamil between roughly the 10th – 15th centuries C.E such as Śivavākkīyar, Paṭṭiṇattār, Pāmbāṭṭicittar, Bhadrāgiri, Idaikādar etc.
- 3) A few ‘Siddha –like’ mystical poets who have been classed with the Siddha thinkers by later generations, or who called themselves *citta* without properly belonging (so it would seem) to the esoteric group mentioned above (e.g. Tāyumāṇavar of the 17th century, or Rāmaliṅga Swāmi, 1823-1874 C.E.).

Many of these siddhas hailed from the hilly regions of Tamilnādu and to some extent from different parts of South India and beyond. Among them one group hailed from Kailāśa, (*Kailāya varga*) with Siddha Agastya as their prime head, and the

⁷ K.V.Zvelebil, *The Poets*, p.17.

second group known as *Mūla-varga* under Tirumūlar, and the third one claims Nandi as their prime and Lord Śiva as chief Siddha.

Apart from these three groups, there emerged another group called *Bāla-varga* with Lord Muruga as their principal *guru*. Besides these, there are also Siddhas of Tamiḷ regions that do not belong to any of the above traditions or *Vargas*, and in this study, some of them are classified as *Vāk* Siddhars. These Siddhars are traditionally not very well known and there is no list of the *Vāk* Siddhars of the historical times. During the modern and contemporary period also there are many siddhars of this class whose words become true and boons are bestowed on the devotees. When their wishes are fulfilled the devotees call them as *Vāk* Siddhars and thus they become famous.

Many Siddhas claimed their relationship to Tirumūlar (*Mūla-varga*). One of them was Koṅgaṇar, the disciple of Bōgar. Koṅgaṇar mentioned in the first part of *Vāda-kāviyam* (verse 308) that he was the grandson of Tirumūlar. The third group which is considered chronologically the most ancient, hailed from the celestial Nandidēva. He is semantically identified with Ṛṣabadēva, who gained the wisdom directly from the Supreme Lord Śiva. Tirumūlar admits that he was a disciple of Nandidēva and one among the eight spiritual masters who are graced by him⁸. He became the Nātha Siddha due to the grace of Nandi Nātha who is cited in a number of post-12th century sources⁹. The Tamiḷ Siddha tradition also maintains that Nandi (kēśvara) was an alchemist. Infact, Tirumūlar in many of his songs declares that he belongs to the tradition of Nandi and all of his 3000 verses were the outcome of the grace of the Nandi¹⁰. A limited number of documents indicate that a historical figure named Nandi may have lived in the same century as Tirumūlar. This Nandi, a

⁸ Tirumūlar mentions that he has seven descendants namely Mālāṅgaṇ, Indira, Sōmaṇ, Brahmaṇ, Ruttiraṇ, Kanduru, Kālaṅgi and Kaṇjamalaiyaṇ. Among them, Pataṇjali and Vyāgrapāda were ardent devotees of Lord Natarāja. *Tirumandiram*, verse 129, 132, p.57, Verse 130 is also saying the similar kinds of things. For the explanation of this song see, S.N. Kandaswamy, *Op.cit*, p.6

⁹ David Gordon White, *The Alchemical Body*, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 2004, p.61

¹⁰ Tirumūlar says that ‘*Mūlan Urai Cheitha Mūvāyiran Tamiḷ, Gñālam aṟiyavē Nandi aruḷathu...*’ It is also said in another song that Tirumūlar authored 30 upadēsa, 300 mantras, 3000 Tamiḷ and all the above three are the same. *Tirumandiram*, verses 132 and 1, p.88 and 87 respectively. In many of his verses, the name Nandi is often mentioned. Ten verses starts with the name Nandi viz., *Tirumandiram*, verses 129-130, 135, 156, 506, 786, 2404, 2594, 2755 and 2907 in pp.57,59, 68, 229, 333, 978, 1064, 1140 and 1218 respectively.

Buddhist monk from central India, left India in the middle of the seventh century, traveling by sea to Śrilanka and Southeast Asia before arriving in China in 655 C.E. A year later, the emperor of China shipped him off to sea again to collect medicinal herbs. He returned to China in 663 C.E.¹¹.

Another group of Siddhas are popular under the name of *Bāla-varga*. The word *Bāla* denotes the ever youthful Muruga, the beloved prodigy of Śiva and the favorite God of the Tamils. From the commentary of Nacciṇārkkīṇiyar (1400 C.E.) on *Tirumurugārṟuppadai*, a *Śaṅgam* poem, it becomes clear that the epithet *Siddhar* (line 176) denoted Lord Muruga and his shrine at *Tiruvāvinan̄kudi*, now known as Paḷaṇi, was once called Cittan-vāḷvu, i.e., the habitat of the *Siddha* (Muruga)¹². Perhaps, this name came into vogue after Siddha Bōgar established the idol of Muruga (*Daṇḍapāṇi*), made out of nine-fold *pāṣaṇās* (*navapāṣāṇam*/arsenic or chemical compounds) and engaged in deep meditation for a very long period. His disciple Pulippāṇi was also attached to this reputed shrine of Muruga. The descendants of Pulippāṇi were the official priests of the temple till the intervention of Rāmappaiyan, the minister of Tirumalai Nāyak, who ruled the Pāṇḍya country in the 17th century C.E.

It is to be noted that a unique Siddha tradition was prevalent in the region of Paḷaṇi Hills and in modern times, many holy persons in that area claim their relationship with Bōgar and Pulippāṇi¹³. Lord Muruga is praised as a great Siddha of *Bāla-varga* group. He rides on the peacock, the killer of serpents. ‘Serpent stands for the cycle of years or the cycle of births. ‘Peacock’ stands for the killer of time and thereby birth and death¹⁴. Murugaṇ, also known as ‘Kumaran’ is an important deity in “*yōga* as the power of chastity, the power of the virile seed, preserved through penance; so long as complete control is not attained in practice of *yōga*, Kumara is not born’; only by making (the sublime) semen rise through the central channel of the

¹¹ David Gordon White, *op.cit*, p.61.

¹² *Pattu-p-pāṭṭu* (with commentary by Nacciṇārkkīṇiyar), U. V. Saminatha Aiyar (Ed.), Tamil University, Tañjāvūr, 1986 (rep.), p.60.

¹³ T.N. Gaṇapathy, *The Yoga of Siddha Boganathar, Vol.I*, Babaji’s Kriya Yoga and Publications, Canada, 2004, pp. 281-286 (hencefore T.N. Gaṇapathy, *Bōgar*)

¹⁴ T.N. Gaṇapathy, *The Philosophy of the Tamil Siddhas*, ICPR, New Delhi, 2004, p.22

sublime body up to the ‘mouth of fire’ in the sixth centre where it is consumed, the *yōgin* becomes complete master, and ‘skanda is born’¹⁵”.

Another group of Siddhas that existed during the 10th and 11th centuries was known as *Tīrthika* Siddhas. They became celebrated for their extraordinary knowledge; fond of debates and display of their knowledge among the public or in the royal courts. The *tīrthikas* were distinguished by certain symbols like umbrellas. It is said that once a *tīrthika paṇḍita* from the South India was honoured with five umbrellas for challenging Dīpaṅkara (C.E. 982-1054), who was celebrated for his scholarship not only among the contemporary Buddhists and others. These umbrellas were symbolic remains of their scholastic distinction and disposition¹⁶.

Similarly, there existed yet another group of Siddhas from the South known as Mahēśvara Siddhas. They advocate the pure method (*śuddha mārga*). Because, the *dakṣiṇa śrota* (the right current), stressed on *vidyā* (knowledge) through *yōgic* practices, instead of using the five ‘*m*’s as used by the *vāma śrota* (left current), which include blood sacrifices, drinking and female consorts. The Tamil Siddhas belong to the *dakṣiṇa śrota*¹⁷. Another School of Siddhas as mentioned by M.S. Purnalingam Pillai traces its descent from Lord Śiva as the author of seven lakhs of verses on medicine alchemy, *mantra*, *kalpa* and *yōga*. Nandi, Sanakar, Sanathar, Sanāthanar, Sanatkumārār, Tirumūlar, Patañjali, Agastya, Pulatthiar, Pusundar, Kālaṅgi, Bōgar, Koṅkaṇar, Karuvūrār, Daṇvaṇtri, Saṭṭaimuṇi, Tēraiyaṇ, Yūgimuṇi and other Siddhas immortalized the Tamil land with multitudes of their medical and scientific treatises based on Lord Śiva’s work¹⁸.

Tradition asserts that Nandi and Agastya learnt the Siddha system of medicine, and also *Śivayōga* from Śiva, and imparted it to a number of disciples. Generally the *Siddhargana* comprised of eighteen. Though this number is mentioned in several books like the *Kāmikāgama* and *Abhidhāna Cintāmaṇi*, the names are not the same.

¹⁵ Kamil V. Zvelebil, *The Poets*, pp. 130-131, (fn 7)

¹⁶ S.N. Saletore, *Indian Witchcraft*, Abhinav Publications, New Delhi, 1981, pp.175-176

¹⁷ T.N. Gaṇapathy, *The Philosophy of the Tamil Siddhas*, p.22

¹⁸ Purnalingam Pillai also gave a detailed account on medical practices of the Siddhas and a brief outline about Gōrakṣa, Koṅkaṇar, Brahmamuṇi, Bōgar, Śivavākkīar, Daṇvaṇtri and Pulippaṇi respectively in his work. For more details see M.S. Purnalingam Pillai, *Tamil Literature*, Tamil University, Tañjāvūr, 1985, pp.262-266

Tirugñānasambandar and later on Tāyumāṇavar refer to the *siddhagaṇa* with respect and approval. This means that the work and tradition of the Siddhars were appreciated even by the elite and the erudite of the Tamiḷ.

The eighteen siddhars mentioned in the *Abhidāna Cintāmaṇi* are 1. Agastya, 2. Bōgar, 3. Gōrakṣa, 4. Kailāśanātha, 5. Saṭṭaimuṇi, 6. Tirumūlar, 7. Nandi, 8. Kūṇkaṇṇar, 9. Koṇgaṇar, 10. Macchamuṇi, 11. Vāsamuṇi, 12. Kūrmamuṇi, 13. Kamalamuṇi, 14. Idaikkādar, 15. Punnākkīsar, 16. Sundarānandar, 17. Urōmaṛiṣi and 18. Brahmamuṇi¹⁹. For many of the above Siddhas, there is no evidence either of their lives or of their works. One of the common themes which unified them is, the acceptance of the human body as the microcosm of the universe, and the human evolution as the ultimate accomplishment of the regenerative power of the Universe. If their texts resist systematization, their anti-establishment voices place them beyond organised religion.

Interestingly, the ideas and practices of the Tamiḷ Siddhas bear semblance to those of the Nātha-panthis and other *tāntric* sects. It is also obvious that the various accounts of Tamiḷ Siddhas invariably mention Gōrakṣnāth as one of their illustrious elders.

Since the ideologies of the Siddhas frequently clashed with the *Vēdic*/brahmanic thinking, the brahmanas tried to distort the significant contributions of the Siddhas. In fact, the *Śaiva Siddhānta* works purposefully excluded Siddha views and their most valuable works from its canonical corpus and social philosophy. As a result, most of the Siddha's works were preserved by the common folk of non-brahminical order. It is clear that Siddhas were completely detached from the brahmanical norms and cultural patterns. But it was their atheist attitude to religious practices and beliefs of the ruling classes is the common thread that bonds them together²⁰. Many scholars opined that the Tamiḷ Siddha tradition is nothing but a continuity or an offshoot of *Navanātha* tradition of western India.

¹⁹ V. Ramachandra Dikshitar, 'The Siddhars of South India' in *The Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 7th session, University of Madras, 1944, vol.7, pp. 162-167

²⁰ Braj Ranjan Mani, *Debrahmanising History: Dominance and Resistance in Indian Society*, Manohar, Delhi, 2007, pp.158.

Lorenzen rightly pointed out that, “*A unique and significant development of the medieval period was the meeting of the āstika and the nāstika traditions on a large scale. The Nātha pantha was an offshoot of the nāstika tradition of the Buddhist Siddhas. But it had upheld many āstika values as well. The transformation of the Buddhist Siddha tradition into Nātha pantha came about when Gōrakṣanātha tried to cleanse the former of the Tāntirka elements by replacing them with the yōgic. His preference for yōga was coupled with āstika beliefs in the existence of an eternal Reality and a broad acceptance of the monistic philosophy Gōrakṣanātha had also incorporated the cult of Śiva-worship in his sect which brought the Nātha pantha close to the Śaivite sects. These features of the Nātha pantha gave it the character of a āstika sect in spite of the fact that it had stemmed from the nāstika Buddhist Siddha tradition*”²¹.

Around the 8th or 9th century, the Siddhas and Yōgis were communicating their ideas in the common language. Whatever their religious and cultural orientation may be, there was no question about their social radicalism. Irrespective of caste, creed or sex anyone could be initiated into the Siddha, *Tāntric* and *Nāthapanthi* orders²². The Nātha tradition of the north India of 12th-13th centuries may be considered as the pioneers or front runners to the Tamiḷ Siddha tradition. Very often, Gōrakṣanātha and Matsyēndranātha are included in all the lists of eighteen Tamiḷ Siddhas as Kōrakkar and Macchamuṇi or Macchēndirar and there also prevail many folk tales relating them to the Tamiḷ Siddha tradition.

The Tamiḷ Siddhas also acted as leaders of anti-brahmin movement. Most of them hailed from low-caste non-brahmans groups, who came up with their unique ideologies such as belief in one God, as well as a passionate advocacy of social justice²³. The Tamiḷ Siddhas like Tirumūlar, Śivavākkiyar and Pāmbāṭṭi were multi-faceted, monotheistic, sometimes even agnostic who sang subversive songs. Many of their practices and ideologies were questioned by the traditional order. But these Siddhas practiced all material and sexual prohibitions to achieve their determined goals and also led a care-free life. Thus, the Siddha movement totally rejected the inscriptive institutionalized Brahmanism, which paved way for the formation of egalitarian *Bhakti* and Sūfi movements with a liberal and unorthodox faith during the succeeding centuries in India²⁴. The strong strain of asceticism in Tamiḷ Śaiva religion

²¹ David N. Lorenzen (ed.), *Religious Movements in South Asia: 600-1800*, OUP, Delhi, 2004, pp.310-311.

²² Braj Ranjan Mani, *Op.cit.*, p. 141.

²³ *Ibid*, p. 136.

²⁴ *Ibid*, p. 82.

was fully developed in the Siddhānta philosophy and the Siddha cult. It is represented in hymns, by which the body and the senses are portrayed as obstacles to the devotee in his or her efforts to realize the Lord's grace. Images of revulsion for the body, and for decay and death, dominate their songs and poems.

There are several categories of the Siddha songs, ranging from the very general to the technically specific. "Every man who meditates on Śiva" (*cittattaic civaṇpālē vaippār*) is taken to signify *yōgis* or Siddhas²⁵. The Siddha tradition, especially the *Siddha vaidya* or the Siddha medicine is fully alive in many forms, more particularly in their songs. Their songs also portray the extraordinary heroism and strength of conviction of the Tamil Siddhas. Therefore knowledge of the works of the Tamil Siddhas is more necessary to have a correct perspective of the age-old civilization, literature and socio-religious history of the Tamils²⁶.

The Tamil Siddha School has received scant attention from scholars and students of Indian philosophy possibly because they have not built up a unified system of philosophy. Very often these Siddhas and their philosophies were misunderstood and misinterpreted by the outsiders. Their importance as a historical movement in a socio-cultural aspect has not yet been studied in whole.

Their teachings reveal that they were not seeking material gains or any other advantage from the public. Their system of *Yōga* is aimed at achieving the experimental knowledge of God. Their spiritual healing and alchemical teachings aimed at enabling the whole of humanity to enjoy²⁷. Tāyumāṇavar says that the happiness he received should be obtained/transmitted to all²⁸. They identified the Reality as Universal Energy, *Śakti* or *Vaiaddēvi*. For instance, Tāyumāṇavar speaks of *Śakti*, the Supreme Reality as the One Source whence issue forth all these multi-universes and many of the Siddhas address Her as the Virgin. Thus, the Tamil Siddhas

²⁵ Indira Viswanathan Peterson, *Poems to Siva: The Hymns of the Tamil Saints*, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited, Delhi, 1991, pp. 207, 182 (n)

²⁶ Kamil V. Zvelebil, *The Smile of Murugan on Tamil Literature of South India*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1973, p. 236; (henceforth Kamil V. Zvelebil, *The Smile*)

²⁷ S.A. Sarma, *Op.cit.*, p. 25

²⁸ *Yāṇ petra iṇbam peruga ivvaiagam; Ellōrum iṇbutṛirukka ninaippatuve āllāmal vēṛōṇdrumariyēn parāparame....*

shine as the most eminent representatives of this long tradition of indigenous spiritual culture²⁹.

For most of them, the chief deity is *Śivam* which is found without any limitation and without any attributes. *Śivam* is the supreme thing (*parāparam*) which is spread all over the universe (*eṅkumāy paranta*), and at the same time existing within the men³⁰. They believe that there is God and also proposes that Brahman encompasses all that is. Brahman is unmanifested oneness but manifests itself in the diversity of all that is-the salt that is invisible but unmistakably present in salt water.

The Siddhas who hailed from subaltern groups and sang subversive songs, kept aside the religious differences and embraced brotherhood, love and compassion, extolling these human expressions as the intrinsic worth of religion. In this sense, apart from Tirumūlar, they carried forward the legacy of two other Tamil cultural icons, Tiruvaḷḷuvar, the author of *Tirukkuṟal* and Nandanār, the 8th century untouchable saint who struggled against brahmanical tyranny to enter the socio-religious domain³¹. To relate the Tamil Siddha tradition into Śaivism, they show the Tirumūlar as one of the Siddhas, who is also already included in the list of sixty-three Nāyaṇmārs. Some Siddhas assumed the names of the great men of antiquity like Agastya, Kapilar and Tiruvaḷḷuvar which led to a confusion and contradiction in their chronology. Tirumūlar and Bōgar are associated with numerous myths. They are masters of the physical world also. Just by pissing³², or even spitting, on a rock a Siddha can produce gold. In alchemy one has to use metal as their raw material, but a siddha only needs a rock. Regarding the supernatural powers of the Siddhas, Pāmbāṭṭi Siddhar says:

*We can make the pillar appear a tiny stalk, and also make vice versa.
We can convert a male into a female and also conversely.
We play and dance, lifting the eight-fold mountains as balls.*

²⁹ S.A. Sarma, *Op.cit.*, p. 25

³⁰ Kamil Zvelebil, *The Poets*, pp.64-65

³¹ Braj Ranjan Mani, *Op.cit.*, pp. 155-156.

³² Similar folk stories are also popular among the people of Ponnimalai region that Ponnimalai Siddha, a disciple of Bōgar, pissed on the hill, and it became gold. Therefore, the hill is named as Ponnimalai, meaning 'Golden Mountain'. It is located some 5 kms to the south of Āyakudi village of Paḷaṇi taluk in Dindigul district of Tamilnādu. The hill is located exactly in the southeastern side facing the Paḷaṇi hills, which is clearly visible from Ponnimalai. Besides, Zvelebil also recorded about such kinds of practices of the Siddhas. See Kamil V. Zvelebil, *The Poets*, p.79

*We can drink the seven-fold seas and belch out the air.
We can count even the countless sand. Oh serpent!
Dance before the great Lord!*³³

The Tamil Siddhas challenged the very foundations of medieval Hinduism. For instance Siddha Śivavākkīyar in a fiery language repudiates the authority of the *Vēdas* and *Āgamas*, the sanctity of temples and the value of worship in them. *The Stone “is like a vessel and spoon, which at any time, does not know the taste of food cooked in/with them. But you, yourself with your inner heart know about Him more, which you do not realize”*³⁴. The Siddhas transcended artificial barriers and prejudices, as rightly pointed out by Kaṇiyan Pūṅkuṇṇānār, ‘Every village is the village of my birth and everyone is my kith and kin’ (*yāthum ūrē, yāvarum kēḷīr*).

The Tamil Siddhas advocates the three highest roads to liberation in their writings such as Upaniṣadic knowledge, *yōgic* technique, and devotion (*bhakti*). But it is difficult to integrate these three into one whole. However, the crucial and central point in the philosophy of the Siddhas is the fact that they understood liberation as the conquest of immortality in this life³⁵. The ultimate goal of the Siddhas is attaining *mōkṣa*. The term ‘*mōkṣa*’ in Sanskrit generally means liberation, joy and union. It represents a totally different way of experiencing ourselves and our relationship to everything else.

Macchamuṇi

Matśyēndranātha is glorified as the second *Guru* of the Nāth tradition and also the *Guru* of Gōrakṣanātha. He is popularly referred in many of the Tamil works as Macchamuṇi. Macchamuṇi, a distinguished poet and philosopher, is also considered as the contemporary of Agastya; but nothing further is known of him. Part of the legend about him is that he was thrown into the sea by his parents, because he was born on an unlucky day, and swallowed by a fish; this is obviously an etymological legend to explain his name. Another tradition says that while inside the fish, he overhears a secret conversation between Śiva and his consort on spiritual matters but is cursed by the goddess to forget it all in the land of women, from which his disciple

³³ Pāmbāṭṭi Siddhar Songs, Verses 27-28, pp. 248-249; quoted in S.N. Kandaswamy, *Op.cit.*, p.52

³⁴ Śivavākkīyar Songs, Verse 482, p. 78

³⁵ Kamil. V. Zvelebil, *The Poets*, p. 58

Gōrakṣnāth rescues him³⁶. He is credited with many Tamiḷ works, big and small, such as *Macchamuṇi Nidānam* – 800; *Macchamuṇi Kāvīyam*-800 and *Macchamuṇi Vaippu*-800. But none of these works are helpful to a historian³⁷ to find out the biographical details of this Siddha. One of his compositions is the *Vāda Nighaṇḍu* a treatise on the nostrums and mysteries of alchemy, which appears to have been once much cultivated among the Tamils³⁸.

Gōrakkār

Gōrakkār is also known Gōrakṣanātha and Gōrakhanātha, one of the *Navanāthas* of north Indian tradition. He is the disciple of Mīṇanātha. He is a teacher of *haṭhayōga* who lived sometime between 900 and 1225 CE. Gōrakṣnāth is however the most famous Nāth *guru* and all later Indian traditions make him the incarnation of Śiva, but his place of origin and date are both uncertain³⁹. The name Gōrakṣa not only indicates the influence of Nāthism on the *Kāyasiddha* school of Tamiḷ country but also subscribes to the view of S.M. Punekar⁴⁰ that several later followers of Gōrakṣanāth called themselves after their master's name. S.B. Das Gupta says⁴¹ that the followers of Gōrakṣanāth spread the Nātha movement all over India. There are many theories about the date of Gōrakṣanātha, in the academic circles. But the general consensus is that he can be date to 10th-11th Century C.E.⁴².

But some scholars dated him based on the reference made by Abhinavagupta (10th century?), in which he identifies a Matśyēndranāth or Mīṇanāth as Gōrakṣnāth's *guru*. Svātmārāma's *Haṭhayōga-pradīpikā* lists Gōrakṣnāth as the fifth or sixth in spiritual descent from Matśyēndra and the direct disciple of Mīṇa. A later date for

³⁶ J. L. Brockington, *A Short History of Hinduism*, OUP, Delhi, 1992, p. 155

³⁷ R.Venkataraman, *A History of Tamil Siddha Cult*, Ennes Publications, Madurai, p. 54

³⁸ Simon Casie Chitty, *The Tamil Plutarch*, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1982 (rep.), p. 58

³⁹ Gōrakṣnāth has become virtually the patron deity of the *Gūrkhās* of Nepal. See J.L. Brockington, *Op.cit.*, p. 155

⁴⁰ S. M. Punekar, 'Notes on the sixth chapter of Siddha Siddhānta Paddhati' in *Studies in Indian History and Culture*, p.400

⁴¹ S.B.Das Gupta, *Obscure Religious Cults*, pp. 375 f. The influence of Nāthism in the Tamiḷ Country is probably as early as the *Tirumandiram*, in which Tirumūlar declares that he himself became a Nātha by the grace of the Nandi. See *Tirumandiram*, verse 130, p.57.

⁴² Kalyani Malik discusses different theories of the historicity and chronology of the Nātha Siddhas such as Mīṇanātha, Gōrakṣa, Jalandhara Nātha, Bhartṛhari, Jñānēśvar, Gambhīrnāth etc. See *Siddha-Siddhānta Paddhātī and other works of the Nātha Siddhas*, Oriental Book House, Poona, 1954, pp.9-14

Gōrakṣnāth is based on the Genealogy of Jñāndev, the author of the Marathi classic *Jñānēśvarī*, which was believed to be written in the year 1290. Jñānadēv claims to be the third in spiritual descent from Gōrakṣnāth. This placed Gōrakṣnāth to the early 11th century. So far, no reliable data on the life of Gōrakṣnāth exist⁴³.

Gōrakṣnāth and Matśyēndranāth are included among the eighty-four *siddhas*, who belong as much to Buddhist Sahajiyā tradition as to the Śaiva tradition of the Kānphatās. The Kānphatās also include them among the so-called nine *nāths*. Many works in Sanskrit and in Hindi on *haṭhayōga* are attributed to him. Important among them are the *Siddha-siddhānta-paddhati* and the *Gōrakṣa-śataka* in Sanskrit and the *Śabadi* and *Gōrakṣbodh* in old Hindi. The *Gōrakṣa-śataka* (Hundred Verses of *Gōrakṣa*) is one of the basic texts of *haṭhayōga*.

Naccinārkkīṇiyar (14th Century) in his commentary on one of the earliest Tamiḷ literatures, the *Sīvakacintāmaṇi*, mentioned that references about the Gōrakṣa are found in the *Siddharārūḍam*. According to the *Paḷaṇi Sthalapurāṇam* (C.E. 1628) Gōrakṣa visited Paḷaṇi and performed many miracles. Besides, the Tamiḷ tradition connects him with the forest of Saduragiri as well and mentions that he was the contemporary of Bōgar⁴⁴. It is said that he was the first siddha who used opium for medicinal purposes. On this account opium came to be known in Tamiḷ as *Gōrakkar Mūli*. He is credited with the authorship of *Gōrakkar Vaippu*⁴⁵.

Besides these, there are many myths, legends and various sacred centres are connected with the Siddha Gōrakṣa. In Puducherry also a village called Kōrkādu is connected with Gōrakṣanātha and every year during the Tamiḷ month of Cittirai, the

⁴³ However, he is the subject of many fascinating legends, portraying him as a great *yōgin* and wonder-worker. The majority of these legends were most popular among the Hindu sect known as the *Kānphatā Yogīs*. They are also called as *nāths* and *nāth siddhas*, who were the chief exponents of the doctrine and practice of *haṭhayōga*. It is said that Gōrakṣnāth doctrine was first propounded by the god Śiva. Śiva imparted the doctrine to his wife, Pārvaṭī on the milk ocean. Matśyēndranāth disguised as a fish and surreptitiously listened Śiva's teachings. Therefore lord Śiva cursed Matśyēndranāth to forget what he had learned. As a result, Matśyēndranāth became ensnared by the charms of the women of the mythical land of Kadalī and forgot the doctrine. His disciple Gōrakṣnāth disguised himself as one of the dancing girls of Kadalī and broke his *guru*'s enchantment through the words of his songs.

⁴⁴ The *Agattiya-12000* says that Saduragiri is the abode of the Nāthasiddhas. Evidently, Saduragiri has a pond called the *Gōrakṣa tīrtha*, a dip in which will cure all ills. R. Venkataraman, *Op.cit.*, p. 53.

⁴⁵ V. Ramachandra Dikshitar, *Op.cit.*, pp. 162-167; see also Simon Casie Chitty, *Op.cit.*, p. 51

annual celebrations were conducted in his name⁴⁶. Similarly, at Vadakku Poigainallūr near Vēlḷāṅkanni, a big *Samādhi* shrine is dedicated to him and believed that he attained his *Samādhi* here nearly about 300 years ago.

It has been shown earlier that both the Vaiṣṇava and the Śaiva saints shared a common animosity aimed at the rooting out of the Jain and the Buddhist sects. For many centuries, they remained as exponents of a parallel movement of these; the Cōḷās after Parāntaka I (907-955 C.E.) deliberately followed Śaivism which was proved to be a more efficacious instrument of acculturation for acquisition of a wider popular base, particularly by the efforts of the Nāyaṇmārs. Subsequently, due to royal patronage of the *liṅga* cult, there was of central importance in the process of acculturation. Besides, Śaivism along with its iconography evolved in direct relation to the specific requirements of the ideological needs of Cōḷa power⁴⁷. The Cōḷa period was also marked by certain other developments in the religious landscape of the south. *Mathas* were established as schools or centers for study and meditation, often in alliance with certain temples. However, the religious landscape of south India was not monolithic. Many protest movements and reinterpretation of the established religious orders were formed. One such movement led by a group of mendicant ascetics who claimed to worship Śiva was the movement of the Siddhas (cittars), who eschewed visits to temples. Mostly, they lived in isolated areas and practiced an indigenous form of medicine and mysticism. Many of them defiled the human body, at the same time as a medium of accessing the divine powers in them⁴⁸.

Hindu society could accept any religious practice. With the arrival of the Muslims, the Hindu religion became chiefly behavior-oriented. The tradition of pilgrimages, vows, fasts and oblation rituals became its core. In this, in the east and north, the most powerful sectarian tradition was that of the *Nāth Panthi yōgis*. They attracted the people's attention by means of various *siddhis*, who were popularly

⁴⁶ Very recently (March 2014), there aroused a rumour in Kōrkādu village that a *liṅga* was unearthed in a newly established plot and propagated that in that place only Siddha Gōrakṣa attained his *jīva samādhi*. In this plot, a hut was constructed and a *liṅga* was placed in it to portray that place as the *jīva samādhi*. But this is purely a newly created myth to promote the sales of the plots. Similarly with the same motto, a shrine dedicated to the Sāi Bābā of Shridi was constructed in a new established in plot in the neighbouring Uṟuvaīyāru village, which attracted the people to buy their plots there.

⁴⁷ R. Champakalakshmi, *Religion, Tradition, and Ideology: Pre-colonial South India*, OUP, New Delhi, 2011, p. 75

⁴⁸ Fred W. Clothey, *Religion in India: A Historical Introduction*, Routledge, London, 2006, p. 98

known as *Siddhas*, *Sādhakas*, and *avadhūtas*. They were worshippers of a transcendent form of Śiva or a *nirguṇa* Brahman and their worship was by means of meditation or trance.

Therefore, in course of time, there was an assimilation of beliefs, rituals and practices between the religious sects; particularly between the *Tāntric* and *Vēdic* cults, in which popular and tribal cults were assimilated, adapted or reinterpreted in the mainstream orthodox traditions⁴⁹. The elaborate rituals of so-called *kaula mārṅa* with blood sacrifices, meat and wine offerings were also advocated by several well-known Brahmins with Abhinavagupta as the first and foremost. For non-dualistic Śaivas ultimately there was only one reality. Thus, the distinction between purity and impurity was considered as ontologically false. The offerings of polluting substances were therefore sanctioned by the above stated syncretic philosophy. On the other hand, *Tāntric* rites that required transgression or ordinary customs were followed primarily by groups of ascetics residing in cremation grounds. In later tradition of householders instead of polluting substances their symbolic equivalents were usually employed.

As time passed, due to the popularity of the Siddha cult, many of the *vaidika* practices like chanting mantras were assimilated with these kinds of folk elements. The chanting of mantras towards the deity had some cosmogonic power. *Vidyā*, the magical speech was used in *tāntric* ritual which centered around mostly on goddess. In this ritual, the body was symbolically used in the *yōgic* tradition by performing *Kuṇḍalini Yōga* and *Prāṇayāma* were an aspect of *haṭhayōga*. Besides, gestures or *mudrās* with postures or *āsanas* of various kinds were used ritually⁵⁰.

The sacred credentials of non-*Vēdic*, tutelary deities were raised to a higher order due to their worship by the dominant cultivating groups of a locality, without divesting them of their local significance. The dominant landed sub-castes thus strengthened their local control. Simultaneously, vertical, horizontal or spatial integration of the agrarian region was strengthened by the linkage of all such tutelaries to local Śaiva shrines. Through these, they were linked to the great regional

⁴⁹ Sarah Caldwell, *Oh Terrifying Mother*, Oxford, 2005, p. 252

⁵⁰ Fred W. Clothey, *Op.cit.*, p. 110

Śaiva centres, thus homogenizing great temples of all India fame with very local shrines in order to establish the numerical strength of these temples. With the changing socio-economic context from the 12th century, apart from traders, artisans and craftsmen were increasingly reviving their earlier affiliations with folk and popular deities and their worship. In that way, the local cults of Murugaṇ, Ammaṇ and Gaṇēśa, were elevated to the higher traditions.

Haṭha Yōga

The *Haṭhayōga-pradīpikā* by Svātmārāma (15th century) describes various complex postures (*āsana*), breath control, and ‘locks’ (*bandha*), which are the muscular constructions of breath and energy which flow through the body⁵¹. *Haṭhayōga* pays particular attention to the acquisition of supernatural powers and the conquest of disease and death. Majority of the extant texts of *Haṭhayōga* are associated with the Nāth siddhas. The Tamiḷ Siddhas of about the 10th to 15th century also wrote poems on the concepts of *Haṭhayōga*⁵².

Kuṇḍalini Yōga

Almost all Tamiḷ Siddhas described the practice of *Kuṇḍalini yōga* in different names. Their songs describe *Kuṇḍalini yōga* in a very different, difficult and obscure language which should be understood only by an initiated or an experienced scholar. Particularly Siddha Pāmbāṭṭi, one of the most celebrated Tamiḷ siddha who largely deals with this *Kuṇḍalini yōga*, refers the serpent to the *Kuṇḍalini* power, which passes one’s subtle body through six *cakras*. The serpent or *Kuṇḍalini* is also sometimes defined as ‘base fire’ (*mūla kaṇal*) in many of the Siddha’s songs. Thus the term and practice of *Kuṇḍalini* too plays an important role in *Tāntric* Siddha cult. A Siddha was named as Kuṇḍalini Siddhar or Kuṇḍalini Māmuṇivar at Tiruvakkarai near Viḷupuram. Most interestingly, Avvai, a female Siddha also too experienced and explained about this *Kuṇḍalini yōga* in her songs. In many of the Siddha’s work, the term *yōga* primarily refers to the *Kuṇḍalini yōga* only. Śivavākkiyar, the most famous among the Tamiḷ Siddhas is also mentioned about this *yōga* in many places. For instance, one of his songs describes this *Kuṇḍalini* power as a vital air as follows:

⁵¹ Other texts of note are the *Gherandha Samhitā*, the *Śiva Samhitā* and, probably the oldest Nāth text, the *Siddhasiddhānta Paddhati*. These texts are concerned with the more subtle levels of meditation and emphasize more on body disciplines. See Gavin Flood, *Op.cit.*, pp.98-99

⁵² Mircea Eliade(ed.), *Encyclopedia of Religions*, vol.6, pp.213-214; See also Gavin Flood, *Op.cit.*, p.98

There is a wandering vital air,
It flows through all the living frame.
If with your mind you seize this breath
And lift it to your head, its force
Will make the old man young again.
New strength will come to weakened limbs,
By Siva and his lovely wife I swear
That every word I say is true⁵³.

Khēcarī Mudrā

Khēcarī mudrā is the *yōgic* process of drinking the nectar from the *sahasrāra*. The *khēcarī mudrā*, is performed to stop the nectar of immortality (*amṛta* or in Tamil, *Kāyapāl*), dripping away through the ‘tooth’ or the ‘palate centre (*talū-cakra* or uvula, known as the ‘royal tooth’), by turning the tongue back inside the palate and enter in the cavity leading into the skull. The *Haṭhayōga-pradīpikā* details how this is to be achieved by cutting the membrane which connects the tongue with the lower part of the mouth and gradually stretching the tongue. The dripping of the nectar of immortality from the crown of the head through the *talū-cakra* is not only regarded as a metaphor for the attention flowing out into the world, but at one level is taken literally, and the *khēcarī mudrā* is meant to stop this flow⁵⁴. In some of the texts this secretion of nectar from the moon is associated with the rousing of *Kuṇḍalini Śakti* and it is held that the rousing of *Śakti* in the *Sahasrāra* is instrumental to the trickling down of the nectar, and sometimes *Śakti* herself is depicted as the drinker of the nectar. Drinking of wine and eating of meat, which are indispensable to a *Tāntric Sādhaka*, are explained by the *Nāth yōgins* as the drinking of the nectar from the moon and turning the tongue backwards in the hollow above”⁵⁵.

Kambālī Saṭṭaimuṇi refers to this process in his poem. The uncoiled *Kuṇḍalini Śakti* animated by piercing each of the lotuses, absorbs into itself the regnant *tattvas* (the five elements) contained in each of them. When the ascent is made each of these *tattvas* enters the state of dissolution called *laya* state. In her upward process absorbs in herself all the twenty-four *tattvas*. When the process of this ascent reaches the *ājñā cakra*, one gets the *siddha dēha* which is not troubled by any of these *tattvas*. He

⁵³ *Śivavāṁkiyar Songs*, Verse No. 4, Charles E. Gover, (Trans.), *The Folk Songs of Southern India*, Higginbotham & Co., Madras, 1872, p. 175

⁵⁴ Gavin Flood, *An Introduction to Hinduism*, p.100

⁵⁵ S.B.Dasgupta, *Obscure Religious Cults*, pp.242-243

further says that one attains *kāya siddhi* when one drinks this *amṛta*. One who drinks the nectar obtains ‘bodily immortality’ and has entered a stage where his ‘body’ has been transformed into supreme bliss. This stage of the *yōgin*’s body is called *mantra taṇu* or *praṇava taṇu*. Leaving the *ājñā cakra* when it reaches *sahasrāra* the *yōgin* becomes conscious of Consciousness, and obtains the *divya dēha*, an illuminated body of knowledge and wisdom. Rōmariṣi says that the *divya dēha* will blaze like a light⁵⁶. In fact, in the final limb of *Aṣṭāṅgayōga* known as *samādhi*, the practitioner raises the *śakti* dormant in his *mūlādhāra*, and unites her with Śiva in the mystic sphere known as the *sahasrāra*. Immortality is attained as he partakes of the ambrosia that flows from the *sahasrāra* by means of *khēcarī mudrā*⁵⁷.

Kudambai Siddha in a very obscure way sung in his poem about this nectar-*Kāyapāl*. He says that ‘*māṅkāipāl uṇḍu malaimēl irupōrkku thēṅkāipāl ēdhukkadi*’⁵⁸, here it means no other milks or nectars are not required to those who drank the *kāyapāl* and living in the top of the hill, here the top may be the *sahasrāra*, and the *māṅkāipāl* may be the nectar oozing from the *sahasrāra* by the end process of the *yōga*. Tirumūlar also describes this *khēcarī yōgam* in a separate chapter in his *Tirumantiram*. The 18th chapter of the 3rd *Tantra* of *Tirumantiram* consists of 26 verses⁵⁹ dealt with the *khēcarī yōgam*. In these 26 verses, Tirumūlar elaborately explains about the importance, method and effects of the *khēcarī yōga*. For instance, in one of the songs he says that the nectar (semen) drops in the centre of the forehead without allowing it to go downwards, one has to try to lift it upward to the top with the help of *prāṇayāma*, which is here called as nectar of the sky⁶⁰.

In these songs, Tirumūlar says that with the help of *Kuṇḍalini*, one has to lift the nectar from *mūlādhāra* to the top of head and consume it. One who tasted the nectar live for many years and never face the death. They never get the grey hair, always feels youthfulness with their golden body. He also described the method of tasting that nectar by folding back the tongue. Tirumūlar called this nectar by various

⁵⁶ T.N. Gaṇapathy, *The Philosophy of the Tamil Siddhas*, p. 132

⁵⁷ Maithili Thayanithy, *The Concept of Living Liberation in the Tirumantiram*, p. 37

⁵⁸ *Kudambai Siddhar Pātakaḷ*, Verse 28, p. 271

⁵⁹ *Tirumantiram*, verses 779 to 804, pp. 330 - 339,

⁶⁰ ‘*Ūṇūral pāyūm uyarvarai ucchimēl, Vānūral pāyūm vagaiyaṛi vārillai, Vānūral pāyūm vagaiyaṛi vāḷarkku, Thēnūral uṇḍu theḷyālu māmē*’. Here *ūral* means fountain. *Tirumantiram*, verse 784, p. 332

names as *ūnīr*, *thēnīr*, *Gaṅgai*, etc. Śivavākkīyar also described about the *Khēcari mudrā* in a very obscure language in one of his songs⁶¹. Thus, the *khēcari mudrā* plays an important role as the final destination or ending process of the *Kuṇḍalini yōga* which gives a Siddha an immortal life.

Folk Traditions

Folklore⁶² provides an extensively rich treasure of information about the Siddhas, their attitudes, their *yōgic* experiences, their philosophical teachings, etc., and also explains their socio-cultural systems, beliefs, values, attitudes, religion, superstitions, customs and traditions through their songs, which portrays contemporary life, documents traditional behavior, reinforces systems of belief, etc⁶³.

Regarding the study of history of the Siddhas, their real histories in many places are mixed up with myths. In some other cases these myths are developed as their history. Therefore it is too difficult to separate these two and bring out the real historical facts from those myths and legends. The myths and legends of the *Purāṇas* brought meaning to people's lives. At the same time, both legends and *Purāṇas* were often intertwined or associated with significant historical facts. These texts are considered as an important media of mass education in the Hindu world.

By the late 12th century C.E., many *Purāṇas* were created by incorporating legends, myths, and customary observances, which are mostly focused on stories of the gods Brahma, Viṣṇu, and Śiva who were also considered to be one god with three functions viz., creation, preservation and destruction respectively. Among various *purāṇas*, only eighteen are considered to be sacred and called as *Mahāpurāṇas*. But many of the minor *purāṇas* were referred to as *Mahātmyas* or *sthalapurāṇas*, which were mostly composed during the 19th century, which glorified gods, goddesses and places of pilgrimage.

⁶¹ *Kākkai Mūkkai Āmaiyaṛ edutturaiṭha kāraṇam, Nākkai ūṇṛi uḷṭaḷaittu jñāna-nādi ūdupōi, Ēkkai Nōkka atchuram iraṇḍeluttum ēttidil, pāṛthapārtha tikkellām parabrahman āṇathē. Śivavākkīyar Songs*, verse 411, p. 68

⁶² The term “folklore” was coined in 1846 by an Englishman, William John Thomas, replacing the earlier awkward term “popular antiquities” that had been derived from the root German word *vooklehre*, which means the study of the customs of the people. See Deep Punia, *Social Values in Folklore*, Rawat Publications, Jaipur, 1993, P. 11

⁶³ Deep Punia, *Social Values in Folklore*, Rawat Publications, Jaipur, 1993, p.11

The illiterate people are not ignorant or inarticulate. They have listened to holy men, great epics and remarkable stories repeatedly told by their forefathers, down the ages. Later, they have assimilated these stories with their own thoughts and emotions, which have all the richness of the soil and reflect the culture of a community⁶⁴. Similarly, oral narratives are the products of the common people. Many of these narratives are changed according to the present atmosphere, culture and the conditions of the society. From the ballad itself, we cannot understand the actual historical content. Therefore these should be analysed critically in order to get a reliable history of the past. The belief that the Siddha are immortals and that these continue to live in caves and jungles that are beyond the reach of man is prevalent even today.

From the chronological point of view, the existing Siddha mythologies are comparatively recent stories and extremely archaic. Besides, the popular legends and vernacular literatures created around the Nāthas and the Siddhas give expression to the real spiritual longings of the Hindu people who are already in search of their personal deities⁶⁵.

Pāmbāṭṭi Siddhar sings about the unlimited capabilities of the Siddhas, like wonder-working Siddha in his songs⁶⁶. Like Pāmbāṭṭi Siddhar, Gōrakṣnāth says that he could control Hari-Hara, he could stop the course of the planets in the heavens; he could submerge the earth in water, with its mountains and cities, and again drink up the waters in a moment, and compared himself with Lord Śiva. Similarly each of the Siddhas of North India having legends ascribed to them with incredible magic powers such as Gōrakṣnāth fed 25,000 *yōgins* and disciples on a single grain of rice; Hādi Siddha recites a *mantra* on a broom; instantly countless brooms fall from the sky and sweep the market-place. as he sits in the royal park meditating, coconuts fall before him; he drink the milk and eats the pulp, and lo, the nuts return to their places in the trees; he makes the sun and the moon his earrings, and so on. Similarly this universal magical tradition also imitated in the Tamil region, which resulted in the emergence of different kinds of supernatural beliefs and myths⁶⁷.

⁶⁴ S.M.L.Lakshmanan Chettiar, *Folklore of Tamil Nadu*, National Book Trust, New Delhi, 1973, p.144

⁶⁵ Mircea Eliade, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*, p. 302.

⁶⁶ *Pāmbāṭṭi Siddhar Songs*, Verses 27-28, pp. 248-249; quoted in S.N. Kandaswamy, *Op.cit.*, p.52

⁶⁷ Mircea Eliade, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*, p. 302.

Siddha Writings and Poetry

The Siddha writings consist of confusing and complicated matters in the Tamil literature and culture. One can come across such of their poems here and there in many parts of the Tamil region. The songs of the Siddhas are truly great poems. But their writings are not in the nature of clear-cut formalized statements of any well-defined doctrine; hence it is difficult to extricate a philosophical system out of their writings, at least at the present state of our knowledge of their works; but it is possible to point out a few essential features, and one day, when their writings are better known, it should be possible to state their philosophy more explicitly⁶⁸.

The most common feature that found in almost all Tamil Siddhas is, they protested against caste and Casteism. However, they were not social revolutionaries who aiming at a radical structural change of the Hindu society. Speaking roughly, the two characteristic features of the social attitude of the Siddhas are anti-casteism, and anti-Brahmanism, particularly a strong opposition against the Brahmans, because of their observance of certain kinds of rites and their practices like external purity. They disregarded, ignored, and despised the social fabric of their times. Some of them dreamt of a future age when there would be no castes. For instance, Pattirakiri lamented that ‘O when will come the time when we shall live without divisions into castes?’⁶⁹. Similarly, Paṭṭinatār sang his experiences of both social and mystical in a very simple language even an ordinary illiterate person can also understand it. The Tamil Siddhas sang their mystic experience in their songs in a popular language. But all of them are written in double entendre, with popular words and esoteric in meaning. Therefore, it is difficult to extract all sorts of reliable and comprehensive theological and philosophical system from the writings of the Tamil Siddhas. For instance Śivavākkīyar sang his mystic experiences and the evils of the society in his period in very simple language⁷⁰. In this aspect, Śivavākkīyar went further and directly condemned the Brahmans who were responsible for it. Further, he says that

⁶⁸ Kamil V. Zvelebil, *The Smile*, p. 227

⁶⁹ Pattirakiri Songs, Verse no. 124, p.191. Here the page No. followed by the Verse No. denotes the work of Tha. Kōvēndhan, *Siddhar Pātālkal*, Pūmbukār Pathipakam, Chennai, (6th edn) 2001. (henceforth Kōvēndhan)

⁷⁰ M. Arunachalam, ‘Literary Heritage – Medieval Period’, in S.V. Subramanian and V. Veerasami (eds.), *Cultural Heritage of the Tamils*, International Institute of Tamil Studies, Madras, 1981, p. 19; for more information about the Avvai and his *tāntric* works, see S.N. Kandasamy, *Op.cit.*,

there is no distinction between a *Pariah* and a *Brahmin* women ‘in flesh, skin or bones’, and that one may experiment this lack of distinction by simply sleeping with both of them⁷¹. He denies the objective reality of caste⁷². Some centuries earlier, the same attitude prevailed in the ancient Tamil society and it was condemned by Avvaiyār, the Tamil poetess who is also considered to be one of the Woman Siddhas of Tamilnādu. She wrote the two philosophical books *Jñānakkural* and *Viñāyakar Akaval*. The second is very popular among the Śaivas. She says that there are only two ‘castes’ among men: the generous and the ungenerous.

While speaking about the songs of the Siddhas, A.L. Basham says that, “The Śaivites produced a new devotional literature by the hymnologists called Sittars or Siddhas. Their innumerable songs gained great popularity, and, in their fierce monotheism and equally fierce condemnation of idolatry, they arrayed themselves against the powers of orthodoxy”⁷³. It is doubtless that the authenticity of the revealed songs of the Tamil Siddhas are most respectable because they are the instructions and inner experiences of the great Siddhas, which are coming down to us from a long past. Though the strong strain of asceticism in found Tamil Śaiva religion, it was fully developed in the Siddhānta philosophy and the Siddha Cult, which is represented in hymns in which the body and the senses are portrayed as obstacles to the devotee in his or her efforts to realize the Lord's grace. Images of revulsion for the body, and for decay and death, dominate some poems⁷⁴. Almost all of the Siddhas’ songs were composed in the twilight language (*sandhyā bhāṣa*), a sort of double language in which more than one secret sense could be concealed below the surface meaning⁷⁵. In addition, they often acted as singers, magicians, healers, physicians, all rolled into one and tried to mitigate people’s miseries. Their love of humanity is manifested in their word and act, is revealed by the lines of Tirumūlar’s ‘May world be as happy as I am’ (*Yām peṭṭra Inbam peṟuka Ivvaiyakam*). This brings out the majestic concern for all

⁷¹ Śivavākkīyar Songs, verse 35, in Kōvēndhan, *Op.cit.*, p.14

⁷² *Ibid.*, verse, 42, in Kōvēndhan, *Op.cit.*, p.15

⁷³ A.L. Basham, *A Cultural History of India*, OUP, Delhi, 1975, p. 278

⁷⁴ Indira Viswanathan Peterson, *Op.cit.*, p. 207

⁷⁵ Nupur Chaudhuri and Rajat Kanta Ray, ‘Eros and History: Sahajiya Secrets and the Tantric Culture of Love’, in Irfan Habib (ed.), *Religion in Indian History*, Aligarh Historians Society, Tulika books, New Delhi, 2007, p. 106

human beings⁷⁶. He says that there is only one god and only one human race (*onrē kulam oruvanē Dēvan*):

One Race, One God
Think of good and there is no death
There is only one faith you can reach without shame
*Think of this to make your thought of God to survive*⁷⁷

They rebelled against all forms of establishment using rough, rugged, and paradoxical languages. Apart from mystics, they were the great rebellions who revolt against the exploitation of the ignorant people of the society. These Siddhas served as guiding spirits to all those who groped their way in this area of darkness. This led to their unpopularity in the midst of the religious orthodoxy. Therefore these rebels were hated, criticized and their scientific experiments were taken for black magic and mistakenly they were treated as Devil's disciples. They had a strong preference for the colloquial or people's language. Because of their multiple yearnings and unresolved doubts including their passion for spiritual accomplishments and their desire for social awakening and transformation, they had to invent a language that can be appreciated in context. Their idioms and diction appear to be highly esoteric and contradictory, that give their cultural adversaries an excuse to label them as mystics. It is right to consider that Siddhas hated classical Tamil. Therefore their poems are overflowing with popular epigrams which carry the colloquial expression and vocabulary of the common people⁷⁸.

However, some of the Siddhas expressed their mystical ideas using popularly well-known metaphors often used by the local people such as tamarind fruit, lotus flower, mustard seed and other well-known medicinal herbs. The songs of Tirumūlar are impregnated with a high concentration of thought and wisdom. Devoid of emotions and folk tunes they became compilations of esoteric formulae.

The philosophical ideas of the Kaśmir Śaivism are sometimes found in the writings of the Siddhas. But then whatever their indebtedness to foreign sources it is

⁷⁶ Braj Ranjan Mani, *Op.cit.*, p. 161. See *Tirumantiram*, verse 147, p. 63

⁷⁷ *Tirumantiram*, verse 2066, p. 823; M.D. Muthukumaraswamy, 'Removing the skin of a tamarind fruit': Rebellion and mysticism of Tamil Siddhars', in *Indian Folk Life*, National Folklore Support Centre, Chennai, Vol. 1, Issue 1, July, 2001, pp. 3-4.

⁷⁸ Braj Ranjan Mani, *Op.cit.*, pp. 161-162.

undeniable that the As already mentioned, the Siddha poetry is characterized by its folk tunes, irreverence, esoteric composition, highly localised metaphors and anti-establishment, which highly contributed to their exclusion from the mainstream academy⁷⁹.

Poetry was not the primary concern of the Siddhas. The rhythm of their stanzas is simple, robust, unrefined, and reminiscent of folk songs. One of them, Pāmbāṭṭi Siddhar sings verses in the meter used by snake-charmers. Itaikkāṭṭu Siddhar sings as if he were a shepherd. They use many colloquial forms. Whenever the Siddhas use ambiguous language, it is on purpose; they are obscure because they want to be obscure. Their obscure language is an important device by the means of which they can at the same time address both a casual listener as well as an adept of greater spiritual awareness who reads a deep mystic interpretation into their verses. Thus the dancing *pāmbu* ‘snake’ may be interpreted as one’s own heart or soul; the *akappēy* is the demonian in one’s own soul or the devil of human mind, etc. In fact, these texts are considered as a closed mystic treasure-box which is bound by the lock of ignorance, and only a practicing *Siddha yōgi* is able to unlock the poems and reveal their true meaning.

Since they lived in different parts of Tamiḷnādu, they do not seem to have come together. However, they are all familiar with one another or their works. For example, Siddha Pattirakiri requested his guru Paṭṭiṇattār to allow him to accompany him, but the latter refused. Even though they lived separately; they are united in their ideologies. Their voices against certain sorts of social evils are almost identical with each other. Similarly, they expressed their perceptions, experiences and mystic ideas to the common people in a highly enigmatic language. Their poetry is basically religious, philosophical, mystical and free from the usages of complicated classical idiom. In order to attract the ignorant village folks and teach them God-realisation, most of the Siddhas used the popular rhythm of speech. For example, Pāmbāṭṭi Siddhar sings verses in the metre used by the snake charmers. Itaikkāṭṭu Siddhar addresses his mind as the *pēy* or ghost. Kudambai Siddhar addresses his mind as a lady wearing an ear-stud. No wonder the songs of the Siddhas are still in vogue

⁷⁹ M.D. Muthukumaraswamy, *Op.cit.*, pp. 3-4.

among the village folk for they probably relieve them of drudgery and fatigue of their daily routine.

The Siddhas have indicated how one may identify the hypocrites in the garb of a Siddha. Śivavākkīyar equates the Siddhas with the *jñānis* (cittarāna *jñānigal*)⁸⁰. He defines a *jñāni* as one who excelled in the practice of *Kuṇḍalini-Yōga*⁸¹. The mind of the *jñāna-yōgins* 'is free from pollution, who are liberated from the cycle of births and deaths, even if they cohabit with the fair sex'⁸².

Vālmīkar expresses disdain for the hypocritical so called Siddhas using strong language. According to him these so-called Siddhas used to grow matted locks and to wear tiger's skin, ascetic robe, etc. They besmeared their body with sacred ashes. They passed for an *yōgin* and *jñāni*. They used to utter lies that they performed *Śivapūjā* and *dīkṣā* (purificatory rites) and they saw Tirumāl (Viṣṇu) face to face. They used to wander in the jungle. Such people were many. In order to earn their livelihood, the so called Siddhas pretended to have originated the four-fold *Vēdas*, six-fold *Śāstras*, eighteen *Purāṇas* and *Vēdānta* texts and they established the four-fold caste system with many sects and groups. In the Siddha text, *Vālmīkar Jñānam* a clear definition of a Siddha is given: He, whose mind is crystal clear, is a true Siddha. He, who has realized that all the world and the beings are nothing but Śiva is exactly a Siddha. Hence, the main equipment for a Siddha is purity in mind, word and deed. Purity, serenity and perfection are the hallmarks of a true Siddha.

Kāgapusuṇḍar was another Siddha who also ridiculed the deceitful pretenders who boasted themselves as Siddhas. They offered spiritual instruction to the disciples and cunningly seized money from them. They uttered unbelievable lies. Only those who practiced *yōga* perfectly and worshipped the Lord offering flowers were the real Siddhas (*meijñāni*)⁸³.

Further, Agattiyaṇ envisaged that a Siddha should be able to control his life-breath (*prāṇa*) through the aid of *Vāci-Yōga*. In addition, he mentioned that he was

⁸⁰ Śivavākkīyar Songs, verse 171, in Kōvēndhan, *Op.cit*, p.34

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, verse 324, in Kōvēndhan, *Op.cit*, p.56

⁸² S.N. Kandaswamy, *Op.cit*, p.50

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p.51

one who attained the state of silence, the symbol and the upper limit of *jñāna*, withdrawing all his senses from the contact of objects. Further, he must be bereft of all the triple defilements viz., lust, hatred and illusion, the products of *māyā*. A Siddha is a liberated person (*mukta*). He burnt the *śāstras*, giving importance to *Jñāna-yōga*. Tiruvaḷḷuvar also categorically stated that a perfect Siddha transcended the levels of four-fold *antahkaraṇas* viz., mind, intellect, ego and consciousness. Saṭṭaimuṇi explicated that the Siddha was a *jñāni* who destroyed totally the impurity of impressions in the consciousness.

Koṅgaṇar, Karuvūrār, Saṭṭaimuṇi and others emphasised on the perfection of *Kuṇḍalini-Yōga* being the primary requisite of a Siddha. They expected that a Siddha should be a votary of *Śakti*. Koṅgaṇar also endorses the same view in the line, *cittargaḷ pōṛṛiya vālai peṇṇām*⁸⁴. Saint Aruṇagiri, the great mystic and devotee of Lord Muruga frequently extols the glory of *Śakti* in his immortal *Tirupugaḷ* in glowing epithets. Some of them are *Mākāḷi*, *Vālai*, *Śakti*, and *Vāmi*. The Siddha Kāgapusuṇḍar takes shelter unto the feet of the Siddhas who are devoid of the three-fold impurities and who are endowed with omniscience. This sort of faith is common also in Śaivism. A true devotee of Śiva regards the *bhaktas* on a par with Śiva Himself⁸⁵. In another text, *Karuvūrār pūjāvidhi*, the Siddhas are depicted to be the staunch devotees of *Śakti*, who is projected as *Kaṇṇi* (virgin), *Vāmi* (she who partakes the left part of Śiva), *Śivakāmi* and *Rūpi*. Further, he states that those who experience her are verily the Siddhas. Self-experience with the reality is often spoken as a true mark of a Siddha. Pāmbāṭṭi Cittar describes the wonderful Siddha as one who is capable of arousing the coiled energy (*kuṇḍalini-śakti*) from the *Mūlādhāra*, passing through the the six *ādhārās* and finally annexing the same with the thousand-petalled lotus (*sahasrāra*), thereby drinking the drips of nectar and experiencing insatiable bliss. He pervades the whole universe like the Absolute. Pāmbāṭṭi is the only Siddha who named the philosophy of the Siddhas as Siddhar Siddhāntam.

Among the other Siddhas found on the southern list are the authors anti-establishment, anti-ritual, anti-caste, anti-brahmin, non-devotional, relativistic and pessimistic. The best known of these Siddhas are Śivavākkiyar, Paṭṭiṇattār and

⁸⁴ *Koṅgaṇa Siddhar Pātakaḷ, Vālaikummi*, verse 3, in Kōvēndhan, *Op.cit.*, p.274

⁸⁵ S.N. Kandaswamy, *Op.cit.*, p.52

Pāmbāṭṭi Siddhar. They and the other Tamil siddhas were wandering *tāntric* adepts who sang in rough popular idiom about the abuses of society, the glory of God, and the need to seek freedom and immortality by means of *yōgic* practices⁸⁶. The Siddhas preached the common folk that God cannot be found in temples or in the stone images, but they can be known and realized only by intense concentration of the mind which weeded of all its grossness of desire and attachment. They rebelled against the nauseating caste system, sickening superstitions, foolish fanaticism, repelling rituals and the loathing interpretation of the *Vēdas*, *Āgamas*, and *Mantras* by the Brahmins and the intimidating tales they wove to admonish any free thinker. These rebels invariably believed that all religious perpetuate ignorance. Religion has always tried to establish a dogma and the established dogma only created confusion. The value of religion lies in the effect it has on us and the extent to which we believe in it.

Apart from social concerns, Tamil Siddhas were also famous for their indigenous medical system known as *Siddhavaittiyam*. Some of the Tamil Siddhas were both poets and physicians, who were vitally interested in human body and its health. The Siddha medical system (*siddhavaittiyam*) claims to be original practice which seems to have been concerned primarily with herbs and other organic drugs. In addition to herbs they make much use of salts, metals, mineral poisons etc., in short of elements of an organic nature. Sometimes it is said that the three basic methods of Siddhas medicine are *maṇi*, *mantiram*, and *maruntu*, i.e. astrology, reciting mantras and using drugs. However, according to some more modern exponents of *Siddhavaittiyam*, the Siddha therapy consists of *yōga āsanās*, *mudrās* and *bandhas* (locks), Sun baths, and taking of medicinal drugs⁸⁷. Therefore the Siddhas were celebrated as great physicians, philosophers, anatomists, chemists, and savants noted for their wide travel, simple living and high thinking. They were capable of performing metallurgy and alchemy of converting base metal into gold and metals are converted by them into medicinal compounds in powder form or solid components of high potency. They have the capability of living and dying at will. They are not easily identifiable, even though they may wander among the public. They are reputed to have used certain herbal leaves to intoxicate themselves and get into a trance or

⁸⁶ Peter Heehs (ed), *Op.cit.*, p. 283

⁸⁷ Kamil V. Zvelebil, *The Smile*, p. 223

hypnotic state. Most of their works are written in a secret code, which mostly dealt with longevity and eternal youth, through sixty-four types of arsenics⁸⁸.

Various kinds of chemicals used by Bōgar, a Tamil *Danvantri* (mythical divine doctor), are said to be very effective in treating diseases. Powdered gold, silver and other metals, extracts from pearls and corals, and juices of herbs are still made use of by manufacturers of Siddha medicines in the Paḷaṇi area of Madurai district. Like Paḷaṇi, several places in Tamiḷnādu are rich with medicinal herbs.

The Siddha medicine is believed to have many many spectacular qualities of treatment⁸⁹. Thus, the Siddha texts are basically found with obscure, esoteric and mysterious teachings which also carry valuable health tips and medical treatises. They were the repositories of all sorts of human life and values. Therefore, almost their texts have no commentaries, no expository literature, and no handy editions. Some of them illustrate the futility of human endeavour, stretching out its hand in quest of the evading spirit⁹⁰. For example, Śivavākkīar's famous lines against the people going around and around the planted stones in the temples are good examples from a big corpus of poetry against rituals and mechanical practices⁹¹. Religious practice for him would mean removing inner attachments like the skin of tamarind fruits and building up an inner god of psychic rhythm⁹². This inner god would resonate with the music of the universe consisting of infinite empty space, minerals and plants that vibrate with

⁸⁸ S.M.L. Lakshmanan Chettiar, *Op.cit*, Magic and Medicine, p. 62

⁸⁹ *Marma Tailam*, an oily preparation from herbs, is applied to the body before going to bed. After hot bath the following morning, symptoms of relief are said to be marked. Gingelly oil is boiled with small quantities of chillies and turmeric and the body is anointed with this liquid compound and given a warm bath. Boiled nutmeg is powdered and consumed with a plantain-fruit to stop dysentery. The skin of the fox is heated in the oven and devoured with honey to relieve whooping cough. Cooked raw rice flour mixed with turmeric powder is boiled and used as bandage material to cure abscess formed in any part of the body. For sore-throat, leaves of the drumstick tree are powdered, the juice extracted and applied to the throat along with *chuṇam*, the lime consumed with betel-leaves. Ginger, turmeric, onion, mustard, nutmeg, cloves and other spices are consumed along with food for their medicinal properties. The water-content of rice kept overnight is drunk with salt, turmeric and asafetida every three hours, as a tonic. The stem of the banana plant is used for urinary troubles and prostrate enlargements. Even today, some rich persons are said to consume *Taṅga Baspam* or powdered gold to get over the handicaps of old age.

⁹⁰ S.M.L. Lakshmanan Chettiar, *Op.cit.*, p. 142

⁹¹ “*Setting up a stone, calling it God, offering a few flowers, Going around and mumbling words-what is this mantra? Will a set-up stone speak, while the Lord is within? The pot and ladle used for making curry, will they know its taste?*”; Śivavākkīyar Songs, Verse No. 482, p. 78; in S.M.L. Lakshmanan Chettiar, *Op.cit.*, p. 143

⁹² Pattirakiri Songs, verse No. 53, p. 186

the chemical complexes of the brain and casteless people who would embody the evolutionary urges in human beings⁹³.

On the other hand, Aḷukaṇi Siddhar criticizes the human body as a filthy salt pot⁹⁴. Many of them are pessimists and harp on the impermanence of things but hope to attain immortality. They are far from being polite to the brahmanical priesthood and orthodoxy. Traces of Siddhas' thought and expression can be seen in the songs of Paṭṭiṇattār more particularly in his disciple Pattirakiri and also in the songs of Rāmaliṅga Swāmi and Subrahmaṇia Bhārathi. An interesting thing in the Siddha cult is, it does not recruit followers⁹⁵.

The Siddha Tradition

Though it is difficult to determine the beginning of the Siddha tradition in Tamilnādu, their basic aspects like *Yōga* and *tāntrism* are truly archaic and pan-Indian. Whenever the 18 Siddhas are enumerated traditionally in Tamilnādu, one begins with Tirumūlar. Tirumūlar is undoubtedly one of the direct and most influential forerunners of the movement. Then we may say that he was followed by Śivavākkiyar, Pattirakiriyar, Pāmbāṭṭi, Iṭaikkāṭar and Paṭṭiṇattār, who were flourished between the 10th-15th Century C.E⁹⁶. As often mentioned in this study, identifying or determining the chronology of the Tamil Siddhas is difficult due to the lack of proper historical sources. However, scholars who have already worked on this topic classified the period of those Siddhas, as the earlier and the later siddhas. The earlier siddhas belong to the hymnal period. They lived in between 6th and 10th centuries and then the later siddhas lived in between the 16th and 17th centuries. Besides these, there is a separate list of Siddhas found in the songs of *Koṅkumaṇḍala Satakam*. Then after, as a continuing tradition, many mystics and poets and other miracle makers are

⁹³ M.D. Muthukumaraswamy, *Op.cit.*, pp. 3-4.

⁹⁴ “The body is filthy, my dear, a salt-pot it is; To get into a new body-the prescription I do not have; If such medicine, I secure. Will I not leave this frail body and attain Thy feet, Oh, dear Mother!” See Aḷukaṇi Siddhar Songs, Verse No. 8, p. 215, quoted in S.M.L. Lakshmanan Chettiar, *Op.cit.*, p. 143

⁹⁵ N. Subrahmanian, *The Tamils.*, Madras, 1996, p. 107

⁹⁶ Kamil V. Zvelebil, *The Smile*, p. 221

included in the list of Siddhas. Some well known of them are Tāyumāṇavar, Rāmalingar, Ramaṇa, Bhārathi, Aurobindo and so on⁹⁷.

Agastya

In the Tamiḷ Siddha tradition, Agastya (Agattiyar in Tamiḷ) is celebrated as the pioneer of the Siddha cult as well as father of a Tamiḷ School of medicine⁹⁸. Many of the Tamiḷ Siddhas trace their origin to Agastya. Invariably, there exist many local traditions and fabulous myths on him. Almost all of the available sources accepted that he belonged to the Vindhya Hills in central India, later he travelled to south and settled at Podigai hills⁹⁹ of the present Thirunelvēli District. But, there are no proper historical evidences for the study of biography of Agastya. *Maṇimēkalai*, one of the Tamiḷ epics, mentions that Agastya drank the River Ganges in anger, when the floods destroyed the sacrificial fire in his cottage, and then released it in the name of River Kaveri to the southern lands¹⁰⁰. *Maṇimēkalai* also tells about the miraculous birth of the sage and his relation to Vaśiṣṭha. The first reference to Agastya as the “Father of Tamiḷ” and the first Tamiḷ grammarian is found in Nakkīrar’s commentary to Iraiyaṇār’s *Akapporuḷ* (8th century C.E). Then, commentators like Nacciṇārkkīṇiyar (14th century) and Pērācīriyar (c.1300 C.E.), narrate a number of Agastya-stories and make him the ‘Sage of Potiyil’. It is obvious that one or more Siddhas assumed the name of the ancient, legendary ṛṣi and there exists a number of works on medicine and alchemy, but also poetic works, ascribed to an Agastya¹⁰¹.

Similarly, a verse in the *Sthalapurāṇa* of Tiruvāṇmiyūr temple, nearer to the present Chennai also confirms the Agastya’s travel to the south and his settling in Podigai Hills. It says that the presiding deity of the Tiruvāṇmiyūr temple asked

⁹⁷ But, Kirubānanda Vāriyār, an ardent devotee of Lord Muruga, who lived in the second-half of the 20th century, is not included in the list of Siddhas. Even though, he didn’t performed any magic or miracles, he has all essential qualities to be considered as a Siddha, by the way he lived. However, somebody considered him as the 64th Nāyaṇmār of the canonized Śaiva saints. But to many of the scholars, he was a great devotee of lord Muruga.

⁹⁸ V. Ramachandra Dikshitar, *Op.cit.*, pp. 162-167

⁹⁹ The term *Podigai* itself is a corruption of *Podu Ill*, (*Podu* means Common and *Ill* means House) which means and signifies a village commons or a place where the community people assembled to meet and discuss matters of administrative importance and course of just action. See S.A. Sarma, *Op.cit.*, p.52

¹⁰⁰ S.A.Sarma, *Op.cit.*, p.52

¹⁰¹ Kamil V. Zvelebil, *The Smile*, p. 222

Agastya to proceed to Podigai Hills and there find and take possession of the sacred Bead of Mercury, the *sutha guḷikai*, which bestows all occult powers¹⁰². This might indicate that his journey southward was not wholly for the purpose of disseminating the teachings of the Himalayan tradition of the Siddha school, as claimed popularly, or for the purpose of reforming the Tamiḷ language and writing its first grammar, but for the purpose of gaining possession of the alchemically perfected Mercury Bead, the famous *sutha guḷikai*, the ideal of all students of Siddha teachings. The hilly region of Podigai abounds in *mahā auṣadhis* or medicinal plant-life consisting of high alchemical powers and healing potencies, such as *kal tāmarai* or the stone Lotus, which is to be found only here.

According to another tradition, Agastya married Lopamudrā and had a son named Sāgaren. He led the first colony of Brahmans from the north and settled in southern India under the auspices of Kulasēkara Pāṇḍya, the founder of Pāṇḍyan dynasty of Madurai¹⁰³. There prevails a fable that during the time of Śiva and Pārvathi's marriage, all the Gods and sages assembled together in the Imaus mountain, therefore northern part of the earth became depressed and southern part got elevated. Therefore, Lord Śiva sent Agastya to the *Pothigai* hills of south to equalize the earth¹⁰⁴. This incident was also recorded in the verse of the second *Tantra* of *Tirumandiram*¹⁰⁵.

When Agastya left the court of Kulasēkara Pāṇḍya, he is stated to have assumed the ascetic life, and to have retired to the *Pothigai* Mountain. It is said that, he arranged the Tamiḷ grammar based on Sanskrit principles and earned the name 'Tamiḷ-muṇi'. Besides, it is also believed that he authored a lakh of verses on theology, alchemy and two lakh verses on medicine. Many of the works on mysticism, worship, medicine and alchemy are attributed to his genius. But language of these attributed works is too modern and not much earlier to the 15th century C.E.

¹⁰² *Sthalapurāṇam of the Tiruvāṇmiyūr temple, Marundīsa paṭalam*, the song says that:
Śuddhamuru Muṇivarane!; Nī pondārundol podigai Varaiyumūla vāndu kānbāi
Yittagay sūthamadu vāyk- Kappenariniya gamana guḷikai

¹⁰³ But the real date of the existence of the king Kulasēkara Pāṇḍyan, by whom he was patronized, is not known. See Simon Casie Chitty, *Op.cit.*, p. 2

¹⁰⁴ See also S.N. Kandaswamy, *Op.cit.*, p. 6

¹⁰⁵ *Natuvunillātu ivulagam sarintu/ Ketukinratu emperumān eṇṇa īsan*
Natu ula aṅgi Agattiya nī pōy Mutukiya vaiyattu muṇiru eṇṇāṇe. see Tirumandiram, verse,323, p. 145

It is an established usage among the Siddhas to assume the names of the seers of ancient time¹⁰⁶. Agastya is said that he taught the different arts, medicine, astronomy, chemistry and other sciences to his twelve disciples¹⁰⁷ and others. With the noble presence of Agastya they are engaging in daily deliberations with the local dignitaries and the elite, learning their ways and in exchange, imparting his own wisdom concerning the Siddha tradition as obtained in the Himalayan school. In course of time *Podigai* must have developed into a veritable Academy or a centre of learning¹⁰⁸.

Interestingly, in the name of Agastya, many grammarians, poets, Siddhas and physicians existed at different intervals of time. There had been a Vātāpi Agattiyar, one Muttur Agattiyar, a Kudagu Hills Agattiyar of Paraśurāma times, one Pañcavaṭi Agastya who is said to have assisted Lord Rāma in his south ward ventures, a Dvārapati Agastya who married Lopamudrā, the princess of Vidarbha and who was a contemporary of Alarka the king of Kaśi who lived some twenty generations before Rāma, as also a person named Agastya who married Yaśomati, the Princess of Camboja. Further, based on his physical appearance, he is also known as *Kuru Muṇi* and *Kuda Muṇi*¹⁰⁹. Besides, in the name of Agastya hundreds of manuscripts and books especially on *Yōga*, medicine, astrology, spiritual knowledge, etc., are available.

Nandi

Nandikēśvara, popularly known as Nandīsar or Nandi is considered as the chief attendant of Lord Śiva. In the northern tradition, he is known as Rṣabha. According to *Śiva Mahāpurāṇa*, Rṣabha and Bhṛgu were the first who initiated into the great *Śivayōga*. Tirumūlar in his *Tirumandiram* paid homage to Nandi in more than ten verses claiming that he belongs to the spiritual lineage of Nandi. Due to the grace of the Nandi, he entered into the body of the Mūlan. By his grace, he became the Sadāśiva. By his grace, he attained all kinds of physical knowledge and because of

¹⁰⁶ Simon Casie Chitty, *Op.cit.*, p. 4

¹⁰⁷ The names of those twelve disciples are Tolkāppiyar, Adankōtāsīrīyar, Turālingar, Semputcheyar, Vaiyābigar, Vāippiyar, Panambārar, Kaḷārambar, Avinayar, Kākaipādinīyār, Nattattar and Vāmanar. But only a few particulars are known about them. See Simon Casie Chitty, *Op.cit.*, pp. 1-3

¹⁰⁸ S. A. Sarma, *Op.cit.*, p.52

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p.49

his grace Tirumūlar remained in the world¹¹⁰. He also says that, it is because of the grace of the Nandi, he got the appellation of Nātha¹¹¹. Along with Tirumūlar, the *Sanakādi* brothers - Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatkumāra and Sanatsujāta¹¹², who are known as *mānasa-putras* (the Mind-born sons) of Brahma; and the other two sages Patañjali and Vyāgrapāda were all instructed by Nandi in the great *Śivayōga* teachings.

Tradition holds that Nandi was the chief exponent of Indian tradition of Dance. He was identified with *Tanḍu* and as an author of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, a treatise on dance and the name *Tāṇḍava* was given to the dance of Śiva. Nandi is also regarded as the first exponent of *rasa* theory and Vātsyāyana acknowledges him as the first author of *Kāma*. A grammar of articulated languages, known as *Nandikēśakāsikā*, also is ascribed to Nandīsa as its author. This work is not available now. There exist several stories about him that he played on his *damaru* to keep the time-bearers, when Lord Śiva is involved in his cosmic dance at Chidambaram. Interestingly, the Jaina system of philosophy and practice claims one Rṣabha as its founder. There is a chance to say that this Rṣabha as the Nandi of Tamiḷ tradition; with the spread of Jaina school into the Tamiḷ lands, as shown by the two epics of *Silappadikāram* and, *Maṇimēkalai* in Tamiḷ literature¹¹³.

Thus, Nandi remained as a great exponent of the Tamiḷ Siddha cult and guided the great Siddhas like Tirumūlar, who is responsible for the formation of *Mūlavarga* in Tamiḷ Siddha tradition. To the Hindu devotees, Nandi means, a sacred bull which is installed in front of the sanctum and sanctorum and also the vehicle of Lord Śiva. In the present context, none worshipped Nandi in context of a Siddha. In fact, most of the scholars ignored Nandi from the list of the Siddhas.

¹¹⁰ *Nandi aruḷālē Mūlani nādippin, Nandi aruḷālē Sadāśiva nāyinēn, Nandi aruḷālē meyyānathuḷ naṇṇēn, Nandi aruḷālē nānirunthanē. Tirumantiram, Verse 156, p. 68*

¹¹¹ *Nandi aruḷālē Nāthanām pērperṛōm, Nandi aruḷālē Mūlanai Nādinōm, Nandi aruḷāl theseyiyum Nāṭṭinil, Nandi vaḷikāṭṭa Nānirun thēnē. Tirumantiram, Verse 130, p. 57*

¹¹² *Nandi aruḷperṛa Nātharai Nādidil, Nandikaḷ Nālvar Śivayōga Māmuni Manṛu thoḷuda Patañjali Vyākramar, eṇṇivar ennodu eṇmaru māmē. Tirumantiram, Verse 129, p. 57*

¹¹³ S.A. Sarma, *Op.cit.*, pp.36-37

Tirumūlar

Tirumūlar was a celebrated Siddha, an ascetic and philosopher. Like all other Siddhas, dating the period of Tirumūlar is also difficult as well as some of the sources claim that he was a contemporary of Agastya, and like him exerted himself in diffusing the worship of Śiva amongst the Tamils. Since he is included in the list, he might live before the *Tēvāram* authors, Tirugñāṇa Sambandar, Tirunāvukkarasar, and Sundarar. Some scholars opined that Tirumūlar lived around 5th century C.E. and some of them placed him in the 6th or 7th century. R. Venkataraman opined that the actual evolution of the Tamil Siddha cult begins with Tirumūlar's *Tirumantiram* (c.10th-11th Century)¹¹⁴. The *Tirutoṇḍar Purāṇam* mentions him as one of the sixty-three Nāyaṇmārs. Since he is admitted in the list of sixty-three Nāyaṇmārs, Tirumūlar is also called as Tirumūla Nāyaṇār¹¹⁵. It is said that he was a cow-herd at Sāttanūr¹¹⁶, previous to his assuming the ascetic life, and establishing himself in the Śaiva fane at Tiruvāvaduturai. His medical treatise is known as *Tirumūlar Vaidya Vāḡadam*. But he is most famous for his *Tirumantiram*, a voluminous work containing an exposition of the tenets of the Śaiva religion, especially with reference to the four different forms of worship, as enjoined in the *Āgamas*¹¹⁷. To the orthodox followers of Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta, he is a semi-divine founder-figure, and also is revered as one of the sixty-three *Nāyaṇārs* or Tamil Śaiva saints. In addition, he is an authority on *tāntric* theory and practice, giving a more detailed exposition of the *aṣṭāṅga yōga* than Patañjali. Finally, he is regarded as the first of the Tamil *Siddhas*¹¹⁸.

The historicity of Tirumūlar as Tamil Siddha and his integration with Śaiva tradition is so far not established. The curious story of his origin making him a northern

¹¹⁴ R. Venkataraman, *Op.cit.*, p. 42.

¹¹⁵ The prefix *tiru* means "revered," and Mūlan is his proper name. The term Nāyaṇmār signifies the status of a canonised saint. It also means "leader" or "master", is applied to sixty three Śaiva saints. The most celebrated among them are Appar, Sambandar, Sundarar and Māṇikkavāṣakar. They were born in the seventh and eight centuries in central and northern Tamilnādu. The hymns of the first three saints make up the *Tēvāram*, and last one's is *Tiruvāsakam*. The songs of the Nāyaṇārs are treated as fundamental texts of the Śaiva Siddhānta school of philosophy. For more details see Peter Heehs (ed.), *Op.cit.*, p. 305

¹¹⁶ "Kudi maṇṇu Sāttanūr kōkula mēippōṇ kurambaipukku// mudimaṇṇu kūnar pīraiyaḷan Tannai Muḷutamiḷin padimaṇṇu Vēdattin Sorpadi yēpara vittenucci//Adimaṇṇu vaiṭha pīrānmūla nākinṛa Aṅkaṇāṇē". *Tirumantiram*, *Tiruvandādi*, p. 63

¹¹⁷ Simon Casie Chitty, *Op.cit.*, p. 113; but V.R.R. Diskshitar give the same legend as Tirumūlar saw the cowherd at Tiruvāvaduturai, instead of above said Sāttanūr. See V.R. Ramachandra Dikshitar, *Op.cit.*, pp. 116-124

¹¹⁸ Peter Heehs (ed.), *Op.cit.*, p. 283

Siddha who came to south India and became a cowherd through an act of transmigration, may be taken as a pointer to the anxiety of the hagiographers to include people of low origins among the sixty-three Nāyaṇmārs¹¹⁹. Tirumūlar is also called as Tirumūlanāthan and considered to be the follower of Nātha-Siddha tradition. He himself says that he got the agnomen ‘Nātha’ by the grace of Nandi, ‘*Nandi aruḷālē Nāthanām peyar perṟōm*’¹²⁰. Besides, as like the *Kaula* tradition of the Nāthas, he also extols the greatness of Śakti in his fourth *tantra*, which is almost exclusively Śakta in its outlook¹²¹. He himself says that ‘*Bhuvanāpathiyām Aruntava selviyai sēvittu adiyēn parindudan vanthanan*’¹²². Tiruvāvaduturai *Purāṇam* and Sēkkiḷār’s *Tiruttoṇḍar Purāṇam* provides some information about Tirumūlar’s life. Besides, *Tiruttoṇḍar Tiruvandāti* of Nambiyāṇḍār Nambi; and the name Sundaramūrti in the *Tiruttoṇḍarttokai* of the *Tēvāram* also refers to him. As a predecessor of Sundarar, he must have flourished at the commencement of the 9th century C.E.¹²³.

However, the legends of Tirumūlar in certain matters are in controversy and many of them are mere fabrication. For instance, he lived for 3000 years and mastered the art and science of *parakāya pravēsa* (one of the *aṣṭa-siddhis*, often advocated by the Siddhas); and he undergone the trans-migratory process and enter the body of the cowherd Mūlan, etc. Tradition says that at Sāttanūr, he saw a herd of cows weeping over the corpse of Mūlan, a cowherd, who had died being bitten by a snake. The *Yōgi* left his body in a safe place, transmigrated into the body of Mūlan and led the cows to their respective houses. But this ‘Mūlan’ refused to return home in spite of repeated imploring by his wife, but entered a *maṭha*. When she sought the interference of the elders of the village, they examined ‘Mūlan’, found out that he had turned a sage and advised her to allow him to go his way. When the *yōgi* searched for his original body

¹¹⁹ R. Champakalakshmi, ‘From Devotion and Dissent to Dominance: The Bhakti of the Tamil Āḷvārs and Nāyanārs’, in David N. Lorenzen (ed.), *Religious Movements in South Asia: 600 – 1800*, OUP, Delhi, 2004, p.60.

¹²⁰ *Tirumantiram*, verse. 130, p.57; here the verse No. and the page No. are given based on the work ‘*Tirumantiram*’ published by the South India Śaiva Siddhānta Works Publishing Society, Tinnevely, (rep.), 2007

¹²¹ The fourth *Tantra* of the *Tirumantiram*, is exclusively a Śakta section, which is considered as the central teaching of the whole text. It carries 535 verses in thirteen chapters viz., *Ajapa*, *Tiru Ambala Cakra*, *Arcchana*, *Tripura Cakra*, *Navakuṇḍa*, *Bhairavi mantra*, *Pūrṇa Śakti*, *Ādhāra Ādhēya*, *Erōli Cakra*, *Bhairava Cakra*, *Sāmbavi maṇḍala Cakra*, *Bhuvanāpati Cakra* and *Navākshari Cakra*. For a brief outline of these chapters, see R. Nagasamy, *Tantric Cult of South India*, pp. 52-62

¹²² see also *Ibid.*, pp. 48-49

¹²³ V. Ramachandra Dikshitar, *Op.cit.*, pp. 162-167

and found it missing, then he continued to stay in Mūlan's body and wrote 3000 verses collectively known as *Tirumantiram*¹²⁴. Then he went into serious practice of *Siddhayōga* and entering *samādhi*, stayed thus for a whole year. It is reported that he awoke at the end of a year from his *samādhi* and composed a single verse and on its completion, he again entered *samādhi*, to last for another year, at the end of which he would compose another verse. His magnum opus, *Tirumantiram*, a work of three thousand verses, recognized as one of the *Āgamas* in Tamil culture, is said to have been completed by this process¹²⁵.

According to another tradition, Tirumūlar's original name was Sundaranār; the name "Mūlan" was obtained as by an accident of history. Sundaranar was one of the alumni engaged in the active practice of the *Siddhayōga* under the direction of the Lord Śiva, and under the guidance of Nandi. It was Nandi that bestowed on him the title "Nāthan" and henceforth was known as Sundara Nāthan¹²⁶. It is as Sundara Nāthan that he first visited south India and arrived at Chidambaram. Again for a second time to visit the great savant and sage Agastya at his select residence in the Podigai hills¹²⁷. Thus most of the scholars seriously take the legend that Tirumūlar has left Mount Kailāś, of the far North and settled in the South.

Based on the information found in the text of *Tirumantiram*, V.R. Dikshitar dated Tirumūlar, after the period of *Tēvāram* trio viz., Sambandar, Appar and Sundarar. Most of the details found in this legend are attested by the internal evidence of the text¹²⁸. That he practiced *Samadhi* under the *Bōdhi* tree, he was an expert in *Āgama Śāstras*¹²⁹, and he had seven disciples, viz., Mālāṅgan and others¹³⁰. It appears that these seven disciples faithfully carried the torch of the teacher's message and

¹²⁴ R. Venkataraman, *Op.cit.*, p.47

¹²⁵ S.A. Sarma, *Op.cit.*, p.42

¹²⁶ 'Mantiraṇ koṇḍu vaḷipaduvōrkku Sundaranāthan solliya mantiram' in *Tirutoṇḍarpurāṇam*, (2:30, 1: 28) quoted in R. Nagasamy, *Op.cit.*, p. 47

¹²⁷ S.A.Sarma, *Op.cit.*, p.42; see also K.A.N. Sastry, *Development of Religion in South India*, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1992, p. 45

¹²⁸ V. Ramachandra Dikshitar, *Op.cit.*, pp. 162-167

¹²⁹ Nandi Inaiyadi Nāntalai Mērkoṇḍu, Pundhiyin ullē Pukappeithu Pōrri seithu, Andhi Mathipunai Aranadi Nālthoruṇ, Sinthaiseithu Āgamañj seppalu ṛṛēṇē. *Tirumantiram*, verse 135, p. 59

¹³⁰ Mantiram Peṛra Vaḷimurai Mālāṅkan Indiran Sōman Brahman Rudran, Kandurk Kālāṅgi Kañjamalaiyanōdu Intha Eḷuvarum Envaḷiyuāmē. They are Mālāṅgan Indiran, Sōman, Biramman, Rudran, Kandurukkālāṅgi and Kañjamalayān. *Tirumantiram*, verse. 132, p. 58; Reference on Mālāṅgan is also found in the verse No. 138, p. 60; and about Kālāṅgi and Kañjamalayān in verse 146, p. 63.

founded in their turn seven Mutts to propagate the *Śivayōga* as such. Kālaṅgi Nāthar is considered to be one of his seven pupils, and Bōgar of Paḷaṇi is considered as a pupil of Kālaṅgi Nāthar. The *Koṅgumaṇḍala Satakam* mentions that Kaṇjamalai Siddhar as another pupil of Tirumūlar¹³¹.

The Siddha elements in *Tirumantiram*

The *Tirumantiram* comprised of two words *tiru*, an honorific, and *mantiram*, the Tamil for *mantra* which literally means ‘the Sacred Utterance’. It is a vast compendium of philosophy, morality, *Tāntrism*, siddha doctrines and the greatest treatment of *yōga* in Tamil literature, which includes a collection of more than 3000 quatrains arranged in nine *tantras* in the *kalivirutam* meter, divided into four parts viz., *Cariyai*, *Kriyai*, *Yōgam* and *Jñānam*¹³² and reflects the theology of the Tamil *Āgamas*. Further it is divided into nine broad sections called *tantras*. The first *tantra* dealt with *upadesa*, the transitory nature of wealth, physical body, and the greatness of non-violence, refraining from drinking intoxicants, etc. The second *tantra* gives the esoteric meanings of some of the manifestations of Śiva, such as *Aṣṭa-Viraṭṭa*, *Liṅgapurāṇa*, *Pañcakṛitya* and so on. The third *tantra* deals with *aṣṭāṅga-yōga* and *aṣṭa-siddhi*. The fourth *tantra* deals with *Śakta* traditions and various types of *cakras*. The fifth *tantra* deals with *Cariya*, *Kriya*, *Yōga* and *Jñāna*. The sixth *tantra* deals with *Tapōveśa*, *jñānaveśa* and *Guru Darśana*. The seventh *tantra* deals with the topics like six *ādhāras*, *Śivapūjā*, etc. The eighth *tantra* deals with renunciation, removal of desires, greatness of bhakti, etc. Finally the ninth chapter deals with the *Pañcākṣara* and *Śiva darśana* in a detailed manner. Interestingly, the above said all are highly peculiar to the Tamil Siddhas and these characteristic features of the Siddhas are elaborately projected in *Tirumantiram*.

S.N. Kandaswamy gives us the summarised substance of the *Tirumantiram* in his work *The Yōga of Siddha Avvai* as follows:

Siddhas are those who piously perceived Śivalōka (Kailāś) on earth. They realized the principle of nāda (śabda) and its ultimate end (nādānta). They are eternal, pure, and holy who absorbed in unalloyed bliss. They have attained supreme liberation, transcending all the thirty-six tattvas. Tirumūlar named them Śiva-siddhas. After having transcended the thirty-six

¹³¹ Karmega Kavingar, *Koṅgumaṇḍala Satakam*, verse 35, (Tamil), in T.A. Muttusamy Konar, (ed.) Sadhu Press, Chennai, 1923, p. 38

¹³² V.R. Ramachandra Dikshitar, *Op.cit.*, pp. 116-124

*tattvas which constituted the visible cosmos, they entered into the unique Light of Bliss and experienced the inexplicable Śiva, remaining pervasive as Śivam. They become Śiva, then remained seeing themselves in all, witnessing all His acts and having the knowledge of past, present and future and settled in divine tranquility. In one of the verses Tirumūlar stresses the significance of devotion to Śiva. He makes a distinction between a Siddha and a devotee (Bhakta). He attaches much importance to the latter. He says that even the Siddhas standing close to the Lord do not realize the supreme light who bestows beatitude on the sincere devotees whose hearts are over flowed with piety. Siddhas were those who eradicated the five-fold malas, viz., āṇava, karma, māyā, māyēya and tirodhāna thereby attaining Śivahood, remaining in everlasting liberation. They uprooted the bondage of birth, removed from the entanglement of earthly existence and realized the properties of the fresh tattvas. It is pertinent to note that the five malas are mentioned only in Śaiva Siddhānta. The Siddhas are those who attained yōga-samādhi, resulting in the experience of infinite space, limitless light and omnipotent Śakti. The yōgins are eligible to enjoy both yōga and bhōga. Yōgasiddhi results in the attainment of Śivarūpa or in the form of Śiva, while bhōga-siddhi confers the four objectives of life, viz., virtue, wealth, pleasure and bliss collectively known as puruṣārtha. The Siddhayāna was not against family life. The fulfillment of these four objectives contributed to the excellence and perfection of human life. Leading a virtuous life, one can earn wealth through righteous means, enjoy life with wife, children and kindred and finally attain liberation. Besides, he enlists the evolved souls, bestowed with divine grace and listed them in the order as Sāraṇas, Siddhas, Samādhi-yōgins or the realized jñānis and the joyous persons with intense devotion. He also says that Siddhas are those who perceived Śiva in them. Like the water on the lotus, they are untouched by both pure and impure māyā. They are the liberated (mutkas) as well as the source of liberation for the aspirants. They possessed the kuṇḍalini power and also have the features of Sadāśiva*¹³³.

Tirumantiram is known for its obscurity because of its unmitigated use of symbolic terminology¹³⁴ which is “in full agreement with the pan-India *Tāntric* usage”¹³⁵. It is in somewhat obscure language and deals with Ākamic Śaivism, yōga, medicine, etc. in mystic phrases; and has many other basic components which distinguish the pan-Indian *Tāntric* Siddha schools: the quest of perfect health and immortality in this life; the basic *haṭha* yōga techniques; and the development of *Siddhis*. Though alchemy is not discussed in detail, the alchemical symbol of transmuting iron into gold is mentioned as a simile while dealing with grace of the *guru*

¹³³ S.N. Kandaswamy, *Op.cit.*, pp.15-17; the reference numbers given by the above author is not tally with the volume published by the South India Śaiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society, Tinnevely, rep. 2007.

¹³⁴ The *Caryāpadas* and the *Dōhas* (8th – 9th Century) of the Sahajiya siddhas employ mystical symbols which mean various things at various levels. In the *Tirumantirām* this trend reaches its culmination in the ‘*Sūnyasambhāsanai*’ in the 9th *Tantra*; e.g. ‘The brinjal seeds were sown and the bitter gourds grew; when I dug out the dust, I found the pumpkin blossoming’; *Tirumantiram*, 2869

¹³⁵ K.V. Zvelebil, *The Poets of the Powers*, p.79.

as capable of saving one from the cycle of births¹³⁶. Some of the important features, shown in the previous chapter as peculiar to certain *Tāntric* schools, are found in the *Tirumantiram*. For instance, the worship of Bhairava, described by the Tirumūlar¹³⁷ is a basic feature of the Kāpālikas and is followed by the Nāthasiddhas. He also describes about the quest for the self-realisation of *Śivahood* in the individual. In his *Pariyaṅka yōga*¹³⁸, he advocated the union of man and woman and equating the pleasure there of with *mahāsukha*, the upward elevation of the seminal fluid in the body for attaining *kāyasiddhi*¹³⁹ are also discussed in it. The stress on the realisation of *Sūnya* and the devotion to a *guru* are two of the basic features of the Siddha Cult, are also found in the *Tirumantiram*¹⁴⁰.

The principal reason to bring the *Tirumantiram* under the Siddha tradition is many of its stanzas clearly deal with mysticism. The language is obscure, twilight and the matter also not easily intelligible¹⁴¹. In *Tirumantiram* there is a separate chapter in the ninth *tantra* called ‘*Maṛaiporutkūṛṟu*’ with typical illustrations of mystical tendencies known as the *sūnyasampāsanai*. Tirumūlar says that when the brinjal (*kattiri*) seed was planted, the bitter gourd (*pākal*) grew out of it. When the earth was dug out, a pumpkin (*pūsaṇi*) blossomed. The gardeners ran to fetch them. But it was a plantain (*vāḷai*) that was fully ripe¹⁴². This is the literal meaning of the stanza. But what underlies this is of enormous importance. The brinjal in Tamil is *kattiri* which also means a pair of scissors¹⁴³. This is the *paribhāṣa* or the customary language employed by this school. For instance the word *Kattiri* stands for briṅjal, scissors, cutters, and a species of snake and also for the period of hottest summer days.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.29.

¹³⁷ *Tirumantiram*: 1267-1272, pp. 498-499. The iconography of Bhairava (*Ibid* : 1269) and the ingredients for his worship (*ibid*: 1271) are described here.

¹³⁸ *Pariyaṅka Yōga* means bedstead *yōga*, see *Tirumantiram*, 19th chapter, 3rd *Tantra*, verses 805-824, pp.339-346

¹³⁹ *Tirumantiram*, 704-719, pp. 308-313.

¹⁴⁰ *Tirumantiram*: 2456 and 2461, pp. 1000-1003. These mention the three fold *Pāl* or *Sūnya* (Vaccum) and a stage beyond these three. All those touched by the *guru* attain *Śivagati* (the state of *Śivahood*) being devoid of all the three *malas* (Impurities); *Ibid*: 2016-2028; pp.798-804; R. Venkataraman, *Op.cit.*, p. 43

¹⁴¹ V.R. Ramachandra Dikshitar, *Op.cit.*, pp. 116-124

¹⁴² *vāḷtalai vittida pākan mūlaithathu, puluthiyai Tōṇḍinēn Pūsaṇi Pūthathu, Toluthukonḍōdinār Tōṭṭakudikal, mūluthum paḷuthathu vāḷaikkaṇiyē. Tirumantiram*, 9th *Tantra*, Chapter 17, *Maṛaiporutkūṛṟu*, verse.2829, p.1174.

¹⁴³ V.R. Ramachandra Dikshitar, *Op.cit.*, pp. 116-124

Besides, the numeral “five” may signify the elemental compounds (*pañja bhūtas*) to the basic fivefold constitution of the human being¹⁴⁴. The body is valued as the temple of God, and as a fit instrument for the soul in its career of self-discipline and search of God¹⁴⁵. Besides, as mentions earlier, the text is often obscure, and contains a wide variety of symbolism, including numerical symbolism in larger.

The land of the Tamil-speaking Dravidian people essentially remains one devoted to the Goddess worship, the ‘Vālai Kumari’, as shown in the original name of the land, Kaṇṇiyākumari¹⁴⁶. In the seventh *tantra* of *Tirumantiram*, Tirumūlar gives a detailed concept of *Śakti*. He describes that the first appearance caused in the world by *Sadāśiva* is *Śakti*. The thirty six *tattvas*, and *Bhōga*, *Mōkṣa*, *Buddhi*, *Siddhi*, etc., all the *guṇas*, and all these forms of the universe are *Śakti*¹⁴⁷. *Śakti* is the earth and *Sadāśiva* is the universe. Both *Śakti* and *Śiva* constitute the above said thirty six *tattvas*¹⁴⁸. *Sadāśiva* with five heads and ten arms is invoked with five *aṅgamantras* viz., *hrdaya* (heart), *siram* (head), *sikhā* (tuft), *kavaca* (sheath) and *nētrā* (eye) and each manifests its *śakti* in different forms. In *hrdaya* mantra she manifests as *Jñānaśakti*; in *Siromantra* she is *Parāśakti*, in *Sikhā* she is *Ādi śakti*, in the *kavaca* she is *Ichhā śakti* and in the *Nētra mantra* she manifests as *kriyā śakti*¹⁴⁹. Further he also describes that *Śakti* in the *pīṭha* is *Ātma Śakti*; in the *kaṇṭa* portion is *Vidyā Śakti* and the *liṅga* portion is *Śivatattva* and the *Śakti* that manifests in the whole, is called *Sadaśiva*.

An important aspect in *Tirumantiram* is the description of ‘*Kālacakra*’,¹⁵⁰ a late Buddhist concept that is said to have come from central Asia to India in C.E. 966.

¹⁴⁴ S.A. Sarma, *Op.cit.*, p.43

¹⁴⁵ ‘*uḷḷam peruṅkōyil ūṇ uṭampu ālayam*’, *Tirumantiram*, verse.1792, p.705; see Kamil V. Zvelebil, *The Smile*, p.228

¹⁴⁶ S.A. Sarma, *Op.cit.*, p. 34

¹⁴⁷ *Tirumantiram*, 7th *Tantra*, verses 1684-1685, p. 662

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid*, verses 1707, p. 670

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid*, verses 1714, p. 673

¹⁵⁰ *Tirumantiram* consists of 30 verses in the 14th chapter of the third *tantra* entitled *Kālacakra*; verses 720-749, pp. 313-323. *Kālacakra* is a system of *Yōga* which stresses that (a) the universe, with all its objects and localities, is situated in the body and (b) time with all its varieties (viz., day, night, month and year) exists in the body in its process of the *prāṇā vāyu* (the vital wind). It believes that by *prāṇāyāma* (the controlling of the *Prāṇa Vāyu*) time could be controlled; S.B. Das Gupta, *An Introduction to the Tantric Buddhism*, pp. 74 f. So *Kālacakra* stresses the need for a healthy and strong

Besides, Sēkkiḷār in his *Tiruttoṇḍar purāṇam* specifically mentioned that *Tirumantiram* has 3000 verses in it. It shows that the *Tirumantiram* belongs to a period after the 10th century, but before the 12th century¹⁵¹. In this work, Tirumūlar says some of the practices which are more familiar among the Siddhas such as *kāya-siddhi*, *prāṇa-siddhi* and *yōga-siddhi*, achieved by the practice of such *mudrās* as *khēcari*, *bhūcari*, or *amuri dhāranai* and by other means of spiritual *sādhana* such as by *yantras* and *mantras*, directed to the disciplining of the psycho-spiritual entity. The union of the ‘Sun’ in the *mūlādhara* with the ‘Moon’ in the *Sahasrāra* of a *Yōgi*¹⁵² and the ‘drinking’ of the nectar by means of *khēcari mudrā*¹⁵³ for *Kāyasiddhi* are described in the *Tirumantiram*. Tirumūlar also explained in his songs about the mode of burying the corpse of a *Yōgi*¹⁵⁴. The *Tirumantiram* speaks about the 72,000 *nādis* in the human body, with certain musical sounds, that a *yōgi* is said to hear in the course of his *yōgic* practice; he sung:

*The sounds of the roaring sea, bell, trumpeting of the elephant, flute
The sounds of the cloud, the droning of the beetle, the dragon-fly, the conch,
The sounds of the kettle-drum and the lute
All these ten can't be felt except by the humble.*¹⁵⁵

Tirumūlar advocates his followers to renounce all attachments and turn the minds towards God. Besides, in his work, he glorifies the potentialities of the human body and affirms the reality of life and the world. He does not believe that the human body is an evil:

*If body is destroyed, soul is destroyed;
And one will not attain true powerful knowledge.
Having acquired the skill to foster the body,
I cherished the body, and I fostered the soul*¹⁵⁶.

body for liberation from death; Mircea Eliade, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*, p. 204; see also R.Venkataraman, *Op.cit.*, p. 44

¹⁵¹ R.Venkataraman, *Op.cit.*, p. 45.

¹⁵² *Tirumantiram*, verses 851-853 and 862, pp. 355-356, 359 respectively

¹⁵³ In the 18th chapter entitled ‘*khēcari yōgam*’ of the third *tantra*, some 26 songs are dealing with the *khēcari mudrā*. *Tirumantiram*, verses 779-804, pp. 330-339.

¹⁵⁴ *Tirumantiram*: 1873-1885, pp.738-742. The burial is graphically described. The body must be made to sit in *padmāsana* (ibid, 1877) and a *liṅga* or a papal tree must be planted on the grave (ibid: 1885); cf., G.W. Briggs, *Gōrakhnāth and the Kānpata Yogis*, pp. 39-41.

¹⁵⁵ *Tirumantiram*, verse 586, p. 267; M.D. Muthukumaraswamy, *Op.cit.*, pp. 3-4

¹⁵⁶ *Udambār aḷiyil uyirār aḷivar, tidambada meijñānam sēravumāṭṭār, udambai vaḷarkkum ubāyam aṇindhē, udambai vaḷarthēn uyir vaḷarthēnē*. *Tirumantiram*, chapter 13, *Kāyasiddhi Ubāyam*, verse 704, p. 308; see Kamil V. Zvelebil, (2003), *Siddha Quest for Immortality*, Mandrake of Oxford, Britain, p.228

In another stanza, he says that he once considered the human body as abhorrence. Then he found the divine in his body in which the god is dwelling. Therefore he preserved his physical body¹⁵⁷. Therefore, he says that if body is destroyed, soul or life is destroyed. Hence it is necessary to protect and cherish the body. Similarly, his idea of preserving the human body differs from the later Siddhars and put him under the classification of *Kāya Siddhas*. Tirumūlar informs us that God more readily accepts any offering made to this temple than the offerings made to the stones in the stone temples. Human love is symbolic of divine love. All love is actually a shadow of the great love.

The ignorant think that God and love are different; none knows that God and love are the same; did all men know that God and lover were the same, they would dwell together in peace, considering love as God¹⁵⁸.

To those of soft hearts, whose minds are melted by divine love, although their flesh be cut off their bones used as fuel, and their moisture dried up wasting in the golden flame, and to those alone it is not forbidden to approach the God, who is the golden jewel of my soul¹⁵⁹.

Another stanza says that there are five cows in the Brahman's house, roam astray. If they are controlled by the proper herdsman, then all the five would furnish plenty of milk. Here, the cows represent the human senses. This mystic interpretation denotes that one, who wishes to attain the eternal enjoyment of bliss, should keep his five senses under strict control¹⁶⁰. He also advocates the Brahmins to give up their worldly desires and also says that many of them are not willing to give up their desires even after they read the *Vēdānta*. Further he says that the past life is like a torn sari, which cannot come back again, and our near ones and dear ones are loveless.

*The Brahmins who wished to listen to Vēdānta
Didn't give up their desire even after listening to it
Vēdānta is the place where desire ends.
Those who listen to Vēdānta are desire less. ¹⁶¹*

¹⁵⁷ *Udambinai muṇṇam ilukkenṇiundhēn, udambiṇukullē yuruporuḷ kaṇḍēn, udambuḷḷē uttaman kōilkoṇḍān enṇu, udambinai yāṇirunthu ōmbukinṇēnē. Tirumantiram, Ch.13, Kāyasiddhi Ubāyam, verse 705, p. 308*

¹⁵⁸ *Tirumandiram, Verse 257, p. 112, Simon Casie Chitty, Op.cit., p. 114*

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid., Verse 259, p. 113, Simon Casie Chitty, Op.cit., p. 114*

¹⁶⁰ *V.R. Ramachandra Dikshitar, Op.cit., pp. 116-124*

¹⁶¹ *Tirumantiram, verse 79, p. 33; M.D. Muthukumaraswamy, Op.cit., pp. 3-4*

*Gone is life as the saree is torn.
The near ones became loveless.
No gifts; no loans; no celebration.
Their stride itself lacks the majesty of the city.*¹⁶²

Tirumanitram explains salvation in terms of the *Śaiva Siddhānta* trinity of *pati* (Lord Śiva), *Pāsa* (bondage), and *Paśu* (the bound individual).

They speak of the Three - *Pati*, *Paśu* and *Pāsa*;
Beginning less as *Pati*, *Paśu* and *Pāsa* ate:
But the *Paśu-Pāsa* nears not the *Pati* supreme:
Let but *Pati* touch! The *Paśu-Pāsa* is as naught...¹⁶³

Thus, *Tirumantiram* remains as a repository of *Śaiva Siddhānta*, though *Vēdāntic* and *Tāntric* thoughts are also enshrined in it. Being a Siddha, he has defined the traits and characteristics of a perfect Siddha in many poems. It contains very many features which are typical for Siddha writings. All of these show the pan-Indian Siddha tradition. Above all *Tirumantiram* is a great specimen for the literatures on Siddha cult. Like Tiruvaḷḷuvar who dealt with all sorts of human life in his *Tirukkuṟaḷ*, Tirumūlar also left no stone unturned in studying and describing all aspects of the *Tāntric* Siddha cult.

Śivavākkīyar

Śivavākkīyar considered to be most rebellious among the Tamiḷ Siddhas, who often ridiculed the established traditions, brahmanical authorities, temple rituals, caste divisions and other social inequalities. He was an eminent philosopher known for his montheistical treatise *Śivavākkīyam*, in which he has attacked and exposed the Hindu religion, and its concomitant superstitions. But the period of his existence is variously stated¹⁶⁴. Nothing reliable is known about the life of Śivavākkīyar or indeed any of the Tamiḷ Siddhas. The oldest of the group after Tirumūlar, he may have lived as early as the 9th or 10th century. Besides, in some of his songs, he referred about Tillai and its *Ambalam*, and its period of existence may useful to determine the earliest

¹⁶² *Tirumantiram*, verse 252, p. 110; M.D. Muthukumaraswamy, *Op.cit.*, pp. 3-4

¹⁶³ *Tirumantiram*, verse 159, p. 70; Trans. by B. Natarajan, quoted in Peter Heehs (ed.), *Op.cit.*, p. 283

¹⁶⁴ He was referred to by Paṭṭiṇattār and was praised by Tāyumāṇavar. Some Vaiṣṇavites believe that Tirumāḷisai Āḷvār was the Śaivite Śivavākkīyar before he became converted to Śrīvaiṣṇavism. Śivavākkīyar's songs were written in the same metre in which Tirumāḷisai Āḷvār wrote his Tiruccanda Viruttam. The poems of this author must have been growing in number on account of additions from time to time. He may be looked upon as one of the early Siddhas. For more details see Simon Casie Chitty, *Op.cit.*, pp. 107-108

period of Śivavākkiyar¹⁶⁵. There available a collection of 527 stanzas said to be authored by him which is written in a rough, sometimes crude idiom. Disdainful of the *Vēdic* as well as the orthodox Śaiva religion, he sings powerfully of the need to seek God within and not be means of outward ceremonies and observances. Many scholars identified Śivavākkiyar with Tirumaḷisai Ālvār, one of the twelve Ālvārs of the Tamil Vaiṣṇava pantheon. The latter says that he was once a Jaina, then a Buddhist, then a Śaiva and lastly became a convert to Vaiṣṇavism¹⁶⁶. Many scholars concluded that Śivavākkiyar belonged to the 10th century, or still earlier¹⁶⁷. Based on the lexical style of the songs of Śivavākkiyar, M. Arunachalam opines that (i) there were two Śivavākkiyars and (ii) Śivavākkiyar I, as referred to by Paṭṭinattār I, belonged to c.10th century and Śivavākkiyar II the Siddha, belonged to the latter half of the 14th century¹⁶⁸.

The original name and nativity of this Siddha are obscure; it is probable that he was named after *Śivavākkiyam* the name by which the poet himself calls his work. It is also said that since he have uttered the five-lettered spell *Śivāyanama* frequently, he got the name Śivavākkiyar. In many poems, Śivavākkiyar refers to the efficacy of *pañcākṣara*¹⁶⁹. In the very first poem of the text, he used the word *Śivavākkiyam*, signifying the statement of Śiva. He meant that all his statements were the statements of Śiva. Since the Lord inspires the Saint, pervading his consciousness, he felt that he was only an instrument through which Śiva himself spoke. *Śivavākkiyam* indicates the name of the text as well as the name of the Siddha¹⁷⁰. However, one scholar suggested that since he has used the refrain *Śivāyam* in more than sixty places in his poems, he

¹⁶⁵ *Śivavākkiyar Pātakaḷ*, Verses 82,84, 171, pp. 21,171.

¹⁶⁶ V. Ramachandra Dikshitar, *Op.cit.*, pp. 162-167

¹⁶⁷ P.T. Srinivasa Iyengar and A.V. Subramania Ayyar accepts a legend that Śivavākkiyar repudiating Śaivism became a staunch Vaiṣṇavite and attained sainthood with the name Tirumaḷisai Ālvār (c. 18th century). See R. Venkataraman, *Op.cit.*, p. 68

¹⁶⁸ M. Arunachalam, *Tamil Illakiya Varalūru-14th Century*, p. 261-262

¹⁶⁹ In the *pañcākṣara-mantra Śivāyanama*, each syllable connotes an esoteric sense. *Śi* stands for Śiva while *va* denotes *Śakti*. *Ya* indicate the soul, while *na* and *ma* denote the *malas* (impurities). If the soul joins *Śi* and *vā* (i.e., Śiva) it gains eternal bliss. On the contrary, if it goes with *na* and *ma*, i.e., *malam*, it is entrenched in the cycle of birth and death.

¹⁷⁰ The whole text, according to the Siddha was *Śivavākkiyam* and the author, thus became Śivavākkiyar on the analogy that Tolkāppiyam is the name of the Tamil grammatical treatise, while Tolkāppiyar is the name of its author.

acquired the name Śivavākkiyar¹⁷¹. This may indeed seem ‘closed by the lock of ignorance’. However: the sound *a* (*akāram*) is the symbol of beginning and of the Primeval Lord who is eternal and omnipresent, in many forms; the sound *u* stands for *uru*, *uruvu* which means ‘shape, form’, i.e. material shapes; the sound *ma* symbolized *mayakkam* ‘bewilderment, confusion’, also *māyā* ‘illusion of creation’, and *ci* is of course the first syllable of *civāyam*, i.e. *namacivāyam*, the sacred ‘five letters’, the mystic formula of Śaivism and *Siddhism*. In other words, the quatrain contains a whole theology: God is the eternal and omnipresent Lord, clad in material forms, dispelling the confusion and ignorance of the world by the mystic doctrine of *namacivāyam*. Schematically in one of his songs Śivavākkiyar illustrate the purposeful obscurity of this Siddha diction

*‘Like so many forms he stands – through the sound a,
having dressed himself in shapes – through the sound u,
the world confused – through the sound ma;
it became clear as civāyam – through the sound ci.’¹⁷²*

a = Supreme God; *u* = in many material forms; *m(a)* = in real world existing because of ignorance and *ci* = removed by the doctrine and practice of *civāyam*. Thus, reading the first ‘letters’ of the quatrain vertically, we get the greatest and the most potent mantra: *a + u + m + ci = aum*, i.e. *ōm ci (vāyanama)*¹⁷³.

In some respects, he is the greatest rebel against religious orthodoxy, sacerdotalism, and the Hindu ‘establishment’¹⁷⁴. He asserts that God is in each soul just like the lightning in the sky which appears in a flash, spreads and disappears. He ridicules the prevalent social customs, rituals and practices, rejects caste divisions and stands for complete equality among men in both religions and social spheres of activity. Many of his poems attacked venomously on almost everything that was held sacred in his time. It was a time when people had the greatest esteem for Brahmin women because of their birth. And the low-caste women were looked down upon.

¹⁷¹ S.N. Kandaswamy, *Op.cit.*, p. 59

¹⁷² Translation by Kamil V. Zvelebil, see *Śivavākkiyar Pātakaḷ*, Verse No. 213 p. 40, Transliteration of the song: *akāra kāra ṇattilē yaṇēka ṇēka rūpamāy; ukāra kāra ṇattilē yurutta rittu niṇṇaṇaṇ makāra kāra ṇattilē mayāṇkukira vaiyakam; cikāra kāra ṇattilē teḷinta tēci vāyamē*.

¹⁷³ Kamil V. Zvelebil, *The Smile*, p. 232

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid*, p. 229

*'What does it mean – a Paraiya woman? What is it – a Brahmin woman?
Is there any difference in them in flesh, skin or bones?
What is the difference if you sleep with a Paraiya or a Brahmin woman?' ¹⁷⁵*

The earliest use of Rāma for God in a monotheistic sense may perhaps be traced to the Tamil Siddhas. In the tenth century, Śivavākkīyar uses both 'Rāma' and 'Śiva' to refer to the eternal Omnipresent God 'described almost exclusively in negative terms'. Revolting against Brahmanical orthodoxy he condemned image worship, repudiated the authority of the *Vēdas*, and rejected the caste system and the theory of transmigration unequivocally¹⁷⁶. He also rejects the division between Śaivites and Vaiṣṇavites. Again and again he speaks of Rāma but, at the same time, he extolls Śiva and Śaivism¹⁷⁷. At the same time, he denounces the Brahmanical way of life; he repudiates the authority of the *Vēdas* and condemns idol worship in temples. In total he is a revolutionary to the core. He rebels against religious orthodoxy. He assails the brahmanical way of life and rebelled against the established order of his age. He speaks of those who drag the burden of books and blabber lies. True knowledge is empirical and experimental. To him, *aṟivu* or *ñāṇam* is naturally not the discursive kind of knowledge found in the texts: 'How fluently the lies inspired by books spring from you! But what use are books when you fail to trace the place before your birth and death?'

*O you who proclaim yourselves the yōgins of knowledge,
Who search after knowledge in books!
You do not know your own hearts!
There you should search for the light of knowledge!¹⁷⁸*

Śivavākkīyar's songs still remains as the most powerful voice in the entire collection of Siddha literature. He is mercilessly attacked and ridiculed the priestly orthodoxy. His poems bring out the humanist and anti-brahmanical sentiments which are so characteristic of the Siddhas.

*The chanting of the four Vēdas, the meticulous study of the sacred scripts,
The smearing of the holy ashes, And the muttering of prayers,*

¹⁷⁵ Śivavākkīyar *Pātalkaḷ*, Verse No. 33, p. 14; Kamil V. Zvelebil, *The Smile*, p. 230

¹⁷⁶ Suvira Jaiswal, 'Social Dimensions of the Cult of Rama', in Irfan Habib (ed.), *Religion in Indian History*, Aligarh Historians Society, Tulika books, New Delhi, 2007, p. 92

¹⁷⁷ Śivavākkīyar *Pātalkaḷ*, Verses 50, 51, 67, 71, 340 and 377 are having the concept of uniting Śaivites and Vaiṣṇavites and also claims that both Śiva and Viṣṇu are same. p. 16-63

¹⁷⁸ Śivavākkīyar *Pātalkaḷ*, Verse No. 444, p. 73,

*Will not lead you to the Lord! Let your heart melt within you.
And if you can be true to yourself, then you will join the limitless light
And lead an endless life*¹⁷⁹.

You dumb fools performing the rituals with care and in leisureliness.
Do gods ever become stone? What can I do but laugh?¹⁸⁰

Śivavākkiyar critically questions that, of what use are temples, and of what use are sacred tanks? Slavishly you gather to worship in temples and tanks? Neither a real temple nor a sacred pond exists in the outer world. They in reality exist within you.

*'What are temples? What are bathing tanks?
Fools who worship in temples and tanks!
Temples are in the mind. Tanks are in the mind'*¹⁸¹.
*'You say that Śiva is in bricks and granite,
In the red-rubbed lingam, in copper and brass!
If you could learn to know yourself first,
The God in temple will dance and sing within you!'*¹⁸².

He was generally considered to be an iconoclast because he vehemently decried temple worship at the same time he said that man should make his heart the temple of God. He had scant respect for rituals which in popular belief had become a substitute for love and service to God and to fellow beings. He was a vehement opponent of caste. Almost all the Siddhas believed in the oneness of all creation and they preached a philosophy of love and service and of an inward contemplation; Śivavākkiyar is a shining example of this faith. Some of his verses have the force of a sabre thrust¹⁸³. As like Tirumūlar who says 'Those who say that knowledge and *civam* are two (different) things are ignorant'¹⁸⁴, Śivavākkiyar also identifies *civam*, the Absolute, with *aṛivu*, knowledge. He describes God as *ap parāparam* 'that supreme thing', spread everywhere (*eṅkumāy paranta*), and being within men (*ummul*). One cannot say at all what is God, how he is. God is described almost exclusively in negative terms, in what he is not. This is in sharp contrast with the *bhakti* conception of a personal, individualized God having so many attributes and residing in a particular form in a particular shrine.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid*, Verse No. 33, p. 14; Kamil V. Zvelebil, *The Poets*, p. 84

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid*, Verse No. 121, p. 27; *Ibid.*, p. 84

¹⁸¹ *Ibid*, Verse No. 30, p. 13; Kamil V. Zvelebil, *The Smile*, p. 230

¹⁸² *Ibid*, Verse No. 31, p. 13; Kamil V. Zvelebil, *The Smile*, p. 230

¹⁸³ M. Arunachalam, *An Introduction to the History of Tamil Literature*, Gandhi Vidyalayam, Tiruchittrambalam, 1974, pp. 261-262

¹⁸⁴ Kamil V. Zvelebil, *The Smile*, p. 230

*The lazy ones say: Far away, far away, far away (is God).
The parāparam (Supreme Being) is spread everywhere on earth and in the skies.
O you dumb ones, running through towns and country and jungles, suffering in search,
Know well that Godhead is right there within you, and stand still!*¹⁸⁵

Those who are rushing for pilgrimage and running in search of God, Śivavākkiyar say that ‘temples are within your minds, temple tanks are within your minds’¹⁸⁶. If you keep clean your mind and thought, there is no need of uttering *mantras*. The mind, the heart, is the temple of God, and God enters the heart in a mysterious way, like ‘coconut water into the coconut shell’. Śivavākkiyar says that the Lord came and made a temple of my heart here, entering it in the same way in which fresh water gets into the reddish young coconut.

*The Lord came and entered and made his shrine within my heart
Like the sweet juice that develops within a tender coconut
Seemingly without cause, after the Lord came and entered and made his shrine
Within my heart, I have not said a thing. I am silent before men of this world*¹⁸⁷.

Śivavākkiyar explains that god is in very simple form. He is the Supreme Being who is responsible for all forms of life. He is in the form of light and if living beings understand and mingle then they shall have wisdom. From this lines one can understand that the supreme power as light in the inner self¹⁸⁸. He also tells that those who are in search of God can search for God as light in their inner self and but mostly they won’t fail in finding the supreme power¹⁸⁹. Further Śivavākkiyar says to his poor devotees those who take always sacred baths, kindle sacrificial fires, and one who pour in tons of ghee; and those who hear words of wisdom; that the Fires and holy waters are within oneself. He asks them to behold remember and attest that an endless undiminished light will appear and union in oneness¹⁹⁰.

¹⁸⁵ Śivavākkiyar *Pātakaḷ*, Verse No. 11, p. 10; Kamil V. Zvelebil, *The Smile*, p. 230

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid*, Verse No. 30, p. 13; ‘*kōyil um maṇatuḷē, kuḷankaḷ um maṇattuḷē*’.

¹⁸⁷ ‘*Ceyya tenki lēyilaṇṇīr cērnta kāra ṇaṇkapōl, aiyaṇ vantaṇ kenṇuḷam pukuntu kōuil kontavan*’. Śivavākkiyar *Pātakaḷ*, Verse No. 28, p.13; see Kamil V. Zvelebil, (2003), p.147

¹⁸⁸ Śivavākkiyar *Pātakaḷ*, Verse No. 105, p. 24
*Āthiyānathu onṟume anēkanēka rūpamāi/ sāthi bethamāi eḷunthu sarva jīvan ānathu
āthiyōdu irunthu mṇṇdu eḷunthu jenmam ānapin/ sōthiyāna jñāniyāgi suthamāi iruppane.*

¹⁸⁹ Śivavākkiyar *Pātakaḷ*, Verse No. 3, p. 9
*Ōdi Ōdi Ōdi Ōdi Utkalandha Sōthiyai,/ Nādi Nādi Nādi Nādi Nātkaḷum Kaḷinthu Pōga
Vādi Vādi Vādi Vādi Māṇḍu Pōna Mānthargal,/ Kōdi Kōdi Kōdi Kōdi Eṇṇiṇantha Kōdiyē*

¹⁹⁰ Śivavākkiyar *Pātakaḷ*, Verse No. 26, p. 13
*Neruppai mūṭṭi neiyai viṭṭu nitham nitham nīrilē/ Viruppamodu Nīrkuḷikkum Vēdavākkiyam Kēḷumiṇ;
Neruppum Nīrum Ummulē Ninaindhukūṟa vallīrē/ Surukkam aṟṟa Sōthiyaith todarndhu kūdal ākumō!*

Śivavākkīyar employs simple similes to convey his ideas. He cites common place, domestic instances to drive home his point. This is what he does in the following verse while trashing the theory of eternal soul and transmigration¹⁹¹. One of the most powerful stanzas of all his poems is the one in which he plainly refutes the theory of transmigration; it deserves to be quoted fully:

*'Milk does not return to the udder, not butter to butter-milk.
Nor the life within the sea-shell, when it breaks, to its body.
The blown flower, the fallen fruit do not return to the tree.
The dead are not born, never, never, never!'*¹⁹²

Śivavākkīyar also ridicules many ritual and social customs and practices: thus e.g. saliva, which is considered by the Hindus as something utterly unclean, he refuses to regard as unclean in itself. In one of his songs, he questions that why the Brahmins are so fussy about spit. And In another stanza, he describes that all are outcome of spit.

*'Why should you be so fussy about eccil, about saliva?
Why – honey is the bee's saliva;
the beetle's spittle is on the flower,
the cow's milk itself is mixed with the saliva of the calf'.¹⁹³
The Vēda you recite is spit. The mantras in it are spit.
All pleasures are but spit. All seven worlds are spit.
Honeyed sperm is spit. Intellect is spit. Enlightenment is spit
There is nothing, indeed, nothing that is not spit!'*¹⁹⁴

And he laughs at those who bathe for cleanliness' sake and yet are impure in their hearts¹⁹⁵. His songs repudiated the caste system and stood for absolute equality of all in the religious and social practices. His great contribution to Tamil literature is probably for the first time in Tamil writing he used the common idiom of the people.

¹⁹¹ Braj Ranjan Mani, *Op.cit.*, p. 159.

¹⁹² Translated by Kamil V. Zvelebil, *The Smile*, p. 231; see Śivavākkīyar *Pātalkaḷ*, Verse No. 43, p. 15, Transliteration of the song is:

*karanta pāl mulaippukā kaṭainta veṇṇey mōrpukā; uṭaintu pōṇa caṅkiṇōcai yuyirkaḷum uṭarṇpukā
virintapū vutirnta kāyūm mīntu pōy marampukā; irantavar piṇappa tillai yillaiyillai yillaiyē.*

¹⁹³ Translated by Kamil V. Zvelebil, *The Smile*, p. 231; see Śivavākkīyar *Pātalkaḷ*, Verse No. 466, p.76, Transliteration of the song is:

"vaicca veccil tēṇ alō, vaṇṇi neccil pūvalō; kaiccu tāvil vaittuṭaṇ karanta pālum eccilē".

¹⁹⁴ Translated by Kamil V. Zvelebil, (2003), p. 147; see *Ibid.*, Verse No. 37, p.14,

¹⁹⁵ Śivavākkīyar *Pātalkaḷ*, Verse No. 276, p. 49,

On the whole, he is a powerful, independent, crude and often striking poet, who is definitely worth reading¹⁹⁶.

He variously describes about the *Kuṇḍalini yōga*¹⁹⁷, and about the term *Śiṅganāda*¹⁹⁸ in his songs, which are all an essential aspects of the Siddhas. He simply describes about the importance of the Siddhas and their appearance in his songs. He says that the persons who don't know to differentiation between the real Siddha and other fake ascetics would criticize the real Siddhas as madmen. To the Siddhas who roams like a madman don't bother about any other things and equally treat everymen and also consider every land as their own land without any differentiation¹⁹⁹.

At last, Śivavākkīyar concluded his *Śivavākkīyam* with the song telling the importance of uttering the word *Śivāyavasi*, the supreme *mantra*. If one can utter the mantra *Śivāyavasi*, all become possible, even one can reach the space and rule it also. The word *Śivāyavasi* itself the two headed fire²⁰⁰.

Siddha Avvaiyār

Avvai popularly known as Avvaiyār is a famous Tamil poetess who is also considered to be one of the Women Siddhas of Tamilnādu. She was a devotee of Lord Viṇāyaka and also a strong devotee of Lord Muruga and many legends and *purāṇas* are available in this regard. She was very much religious who also practised *Yōga*. Really she was an *yōgin* and a Siddha. It is said that when she was taking rest in the precincts of a temple, after a long wearisome journey, the temple priest denounced her for having stretched her feet towards the idol, enshrined in the sanctum sanctorum. She was too conscious that the Lord was an omnipresent. So she politely asked the priest to show her the place where God did not exist, that she might repose in that direction,

¹⁹⁶ Kamil V. Zvelebil, *The Smile*, p. 231

¹⁹⁷ *Śivavākkīyar Pātalkaḷ*, Verse No. 358, p. 60

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid*, Verse No. 165 and 195, pp. 33, 37

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid*, Verse No. 492, p. 80

Cittar enṇum Śiṛiyar enṇum ariyoṇātha Cīvarkāl!./ Cittar Inku irunthapōthu pittar enṇu eṇṇuvīr!
Cittar Inku irunthum eṇṇa pittan nāṭṭirupārō?./ Atthan nādum Inthanādum avarkaḷūk kelāmonrē.

²⁰⁰ *Śivavākkīyar Pātalkaḷ*, Verse No. 512, p. 82

Śivāyavasi ennavum chchebikka achchagamelam; Śivāyavasi ennavum chchebikka vānum siddhiyam
Śivāyavasi ennavum chchebikka vānam ālalām; Śivāyavasi enbade irutalai thī yāme.

turn her limbs to her convenience. Siddha Avvaiyār is deemed to be a contemporary of Saint Sundarar (c.710 C.E.) and his royal friend-cum-devotee Cēramāṇ Perumāḷ Nāyaṇār. According to a legend, when she sat for meditation upon her favorite deity Viṇāyaka, she learnt through intuition that Sundarar, mounted on a white elephant and Cēramāṇ on a white horse were sojourning to Kailāś, the abode of Śiva. She also had a liking to reach the holy abode and hence hurried her prayer. Thus Viṇāyaka lifted her up with his trunk and placed her in the holy spot, just before the arrival of Sundarar and Cēramāṇ. A poem has also been in vogue, narrating briefly this incident. Here both the elephant and horse may be symbolically denoting the *yōga-sādhana* of the Siddhas to reach the Absolute²⁰¹.

According to Tamiḷ tradition, since Kapilar, Avvai and Tiruvalluvar, as also Adigamān-the chieftain of Tagadūr, otherwise known as Dharmapuri, all had the same Ādi- Bhagavan as parents. Tamiḷ literature also bears witness to the generous gift of the rare “black *āmlā* (*Embelic myrobalam*)” fruit made to Avvai by the Chieftain Adigamān Nedumān Añji of Tagadūr; this fruit was supposed to bestow total rejuvenation²⁰². Many scholars believe that there are many persons lived in the same name and the Avvai of the *Saṅgam* period may have been a different person. According to another popular tradition she had enjoyed the Grace other *iṣṭa devatā*, the Elephant-headed God, Gaṇēśa, and blessed by Him, to remain “an old maid forever”- Avvai; so she stayed unmarried.

It is believed that Siddha Avvaiyār had composed the four ethical works viz., *Ātti Sūdi*, *Koṇṇrai Vēndaṇ*²⁰³, *Vākkunḍām* alias *Mūdurai* and *Nalvaḷi* at an early period. Interestingly, all these four texts start with the invocatory songs to Viṇāyaka. Her devotion to Viṇāyaka enabled her to attain *yōgic* experience and sing *Viṇāyakar Akaval* and *Avvai Kuṛaḷ*²⁰⁴ during more mature period. The Śaivites recite the poem

²⁰¹ S.N. Kandasamy, *Op.cit.*, pp. 133-134

²⁰² S.A. Sarma, *Op.cit.*, p.87-88

²⁰³ *Koṇṇrai Vēndaṇ* provides a clue in fixing the historical period of Avvaiyār Siddha. The opening verse of this ethical text is quoted by Ilampūraṇar, the commentator of *Tolkāppiyam*. He lived in the 11th century C.E. Therefore, *Koṇṇrai Vēndaṇ* should have been written before 11th century C.E. But S.N. Kandasamy dated her to the 8th century. See S.N. Kandasamy, *Op.cit.*, p. 135

²⁰⁴ *Avvai Kuṛaḷ* is a unique text on *Yōga* and *jñāna* and included in the works of Tamiḷ Siddhas. Like *Tirukkuraḷ*, it was divided into three broad divisions viz., *Vīṭṭūneṇi Pāl*, *Tiruvārūtpāl* and *Taṇpāl*. In total, it consists of 310 couplets, divided into 31 chapters and three sections. See *Ibid*, p. 134

with ardent piety in their daily worship. They believe that the poem possesses *māntric* potency, bringing to the devotee the benign grace of Viṇāyaka. *Periya Jñāna Kōrvai* includes in its anthology what is generally known as *Avvai Kuṛaḷ*. This work in about forty distich verses expounds the most recondite teachings on higher alchemy or the transformation of man; that Avvai was an initiate to occult teachings becomes evident from this work. Besides, a distinguishing characteristic feature of a Siddha is that true siddhas did not sing in praise of local deities. This assertion apparently contradicts the example provided by the *Viṇāyakar Akaval* of Siddha Avvaiyār until one looks more deeply into the esoteric significance of the poem. So the Siddhas like Avvaiyār encouraged the worship of Viṇāyaka or Gaṇēśa.

In the Hindu pantheon, Viṇāyaka is accorded a venerable position and it is customary with the Hindus to commence any work only after paying homage to Lord Viṇāyaka. The names and epithets of Viṇāyakā are very many. He is popularly known as Piḷḷaiyār, the son of Śiva. He is called Gaṇapati or Gaṇēśa, since he is the chief of the *bhūta-gaṇa* of Śiva. His epithet Vignēśvara denotes that He is the dispeller of impediments and obstacles. Normally he is adored as a celibate. Sometimes, Siddhi and Buddhi are said to be His consorts. Actually *Siddhi* stands for attainments, while *Buddhi* for intellect. Thus, *Siddhi* and *Buddhi* are personified to be His spouses. In the *Āgamic* scriptures, His manifestations are reckoned to be thirty two. Each of them is depicted with a particular form and name. Some of the names of these divine incarnations are Bāla Gaṇapati, Śakti Gaṇapati, Siddhi Gaṇapati, Vigna Gaṇapati, Mahā Gaṇapati, etc.²⁰⁵.

Significance of the *Viṇāyakar Akaval*

Viṇāyakar Akaval is both the spiritual autobiography of Avvaiyār and her mystical experience of *samādhi* as well, which are pleasantly projects the delightful and divine personality of Viṇāyaka. According to the Siddhas, Viṇāyaka is regarded to be the Lord of the *mūlādhāra*, where He resides. Siddha Bhadrāgiri longed for the day when he could surrender himself at the lotus feet of Gaṇapati, residing at the

²⁰⁵ S.N. Kandaswamy, *Op.cit*, pp. 161-162; for more descriptions see T.A. Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, 2 vols.

end of the *mūlādhāra*²⁰⁶. Through self-surrender one wins the grace and the blessings of Viṇāyaka necessary for the *sādhaka* to evoke the primordial energy of this *cakra*, known as *kuṇḍalini-śakti*, which then passes through the six-fold *ādhāras*, and finally uniting with the thousand-petalled lotus. Then, an *amṛta* or ambrosial nectar which gives one the immortality is secreted at the back of the throat²⁰⁷.

Viṇāyakar Akaval from the phenomenal or external point of view may be considered as a religious poem. It is also considered as a *sthōtra* and an *sāstra*. From the esoteric or noumenal angle, it is a work of *Kuṇḍalini yōga* and its techniques and wisdom, in which Viṇāyaka represents the personification of the *Praṇava*, the sound of *Aum*, and the Supreme *Guru* who taught her *Kuṇḍalini yōga*. The very fact that this poem *Viṇāyakar Akaval* is not singing the praise of any local deity in any particular shrine, exhibits the characteristic feature of a Siddha as one who does not worship any local deity in a particular temple shrine, but worshipping Him as the esoteric *kuṇḍalini* energy. The entire poem is a symbolic rendering of the esoteric path of *Kuṇḍalini yōga*, leading to *jñāna*²⁰⁸. The poem runs to 72 metrical lines, describing the personified cosmic force of *Praṇava* of *Aum* and relating her rare mystical experiences as a practitioner of *Kuṇḍalini Yōga*.

Paṭṭiṇattār

Paṭṭiṇattār was a celebrated philosopher, who lived at Kāveripūmpaṭṭiṇam in 10th century C.E. He belonged to the Cheṭṭy caste, and his real name is said to have been Veṅkata Cheṭṭy. He was possessed of great wealth, which he acquired by trading with Ceylon and the neighbouring islands. One day hearing that some of his ships which had been missing for a time returned to the port laden with gold dust, he went to see them, and during his absence, a Śaiva mendicant called at his house, and asked alms of his wife; but she refused, saying that she could not give any when her husband was not at home. The Śaiva mendicant thereupon went away, leaving with her a slip (palm leaf) in a rag, and requesting her to deliver it to her husband on his return. When Paṭṭiṇattār returned to his house, he looks into slip and finding the words

²⁰⁶ *Ādhāra Mūlathadiyil Gaṇapathiyai Pādhāra vindham paṇithu nirpatu ekkālam? Patiragiri Pātalkal, Meyjñāna Pulampal*, verse 66, p.186

²⁰⁷ S.N. Kandaswamy, *Op.cit.*, p. 189

²⁰⁸ *Ibid*, pp. ix-x

‘*kādharrā ūssiyum vārāthu kānuṅṅ kadai vaḷikkē*’ which means “Mind that even a needle with a broken eye will not follow thee in thy last day”. He at once imbibed an aversion of the worldly life, gave away all his wealth to the people around, and abandoning his house, became a naked ascetic, and passed the remainder of his days, subsisting wholly on alms, and esteeming a potsherd and pure gold alike. He had a sister, who, ashamed of his conduct, attempted to poison him, but without success. He latterly took up his abode in a wood at Tiruvoṛṇṇiyūr, where he caused the cowherds, who resorted to the wood to pasture their cattle, to bury him by day up to the shoulders, leaving only his neck and head above the ground, and take him up at night fall; but one day having been inadvertently allowed to remain buried during the night, he was found dead the next morning. He appears to have been likewise a poet, as we have a collection of poems which he composed in praise of the different Śaiva shrines he had visited, besides a number of elegiac verses which he ejaculated extempore at the cremation of his mother’s corpse²⁰⁹.

Kamil V. Zvelebil suggests the probability of “at least two poets are bearing this name” known to Tamiḷ literature, and in support, refers to *Tirumurai*, 11th book of the Śaiva canon. Students of Tamiḷ literature and history will find this calling for clarification, not only to establish the identity of Paṭṭiṇattār, but also to clarify the context in terms of Tamiḷ literature and history. His compositions are included in the collection known as *Peria Jñāna Kōrvai*, and who is said to have lived sometime in 10th century C.E.²¹⁰.

The term *Paṭṭiṇam* refers to both Kāveripaṭṭiṇam and Chennai (Madras), and *Paṭṭiṇattār* means ‘Townsmen’. It is proved that all his gods and the temples he had visited lie within reach of Madras and around, and his last days and his final disappearance or *Samādhi* happened in Tiruvoṛṇṇiyūr, as noted earlier, an outer suburb of Madras on the seashore²¹¹.

²⁰⁹ Simon Casie Chitty, *Op.cit.*, p. 78

²¹⁰ In Paṭṭiṇattār’s poems, we find the Telugu plural suffix-‘*lu*’ and some other indications which seem to point out that the poet belonged to the Vijayanagara period. see Kamil V. Zvelebil, *The Smile*, p. 221(notes)

²¹¹ S.A. Sarma, *Op.cit.*, p.71

Nowhere in his work, the latter Paṭṭiṇattār speak of *Śakti* or in his numerous visits to various religious shrines around Madras, does he sing the praises of *Śakti*, the Mother goddess, as is the noted custom of all Tamiḻ Siddhars. Furthermore, his philosophy is one of ascetic denial of life here and thirsting for the “quiet” of the Absolute of the *Advaita* tradition, contrary to the holistic philosophy of the Siddhas and their concern for the welfare of all humanity. Paṭṭiṇattār displays all the zeal, vehemence and intensity in feelings and his convictions that are normal in the case of conversions from rank sinning to rare spirituality. One cannot deny that he was in his earlier lifestyle, prior to his renouncing the pleasure of mundane life, given to libertinism, freely indulging his sensuous pleasures; his subsequent adoption of the life of a renunciate and of the way of the dedicated Śaivite may be read as compensating factors in his self-criticism and repentance.

According to oral tradition Paṭṭiṇattār belonged to the wealthy Chetṭiār clan and invested his riches in foreign (shipping) trade and was prosperous; he was also, as is the custom those days, well read in the Tamiḻ ways and literature and language, as amply evidenced in his poems. But both his wife and himself were not happy, lacking a son who could carry the name of the family. They thus prayed to Śiva for the grace of a son. The story then goes that one day Śiva Himself in the guise of a babe was seen left on the steps of his house, whom the loving wife took care of and adopted as their own child. Subsequently, when the child turned sixteen, the story has it that he handed a torn piece of silk to his mother, with a broken sewing needle stuck to it, and without a word further, left, never to be seen again. The message was clear²¹².

When Paṭṭiṇattār or Tiruveṅkāḍar, arrived at home, her wife handed him this parting gift from the son. When he saw this, the meaning of the message struck his heart straightway; he sensed at once that the son was none else than God Śiva Himself come to redeem him from his unholy ways. He then renounced all his connection with his family, his wealth or his business that was flourishing, and went out to live the life of a mendicant-ascetic, ardently seeking the Grace of Śiva and awaiting his final redemption. In his poems, he expresses this fact thus:

*“All these ill-begotten riches and the hidden treasures availeth not!
Even an eyeless needle will not follow thee in thy last days”.*

²¹² S.A. Sarma, *Op.cit.*, p.72

Oral tradition further records that Tiruveṅgāḍar even after renouncing, stayed on around his familiar surroundings where he lived with his mother and family, claiming that until the death of his mother, he would stay around to fulfill his duty her; *Kudi Irunda vītil kolli vaippēn* which means I shall stay until I set fire to the house I dwelt in (meaning his mother). That he loved his mother beyond words is borne by the spontaneous outpourings of “lamentations” on the passing way of his mother:

“When shall I behold her again, who delivered me after all the anguish and labour of ten months, and who, on hearing the birth of a son, so lovingly took me in her arms and fed me with her milk from those richly adorned breasts others? O, How shall I set fire to burn my mother who prayed so to Śiva day and night and carrying me for three-hundred days, delivered me to this world? O, How shall I do this final rite of pouring rice in her mouth, the mouth that uttered those sweet words of “honey,” “my nectar” and “my richest Prince,” instead of delighting her by revering her with gifts and presents ceremonially placed? O, to behold the hand of my mother so being reduced to ashes, the selfsame hand that so protected me as a child from even the shadow of sparrow in flight? She was there seated! She was seen in the street! She was yesterday! But today she was burnt and reduced to ashes! For the final rite of pouring milk, O Ye, do be present! Hesitate not! It is all the Will of the Most High!”

Oral tradition further records the incident when Paṭṭiṇattār was resting near the eastern gate of the temple at Tiruvidaimarudūr; he met Badragiriyaṛ who was staying at the western gate of the same temple. When he was asked about the “whereabouts of *Kudumbi*” (a family man), Paṭṭiṇattār pointed to the western gate, where Badragiriyaṛ was then resting, with his dog and a few other necessities, which Paṭṭiṇattār pointed out as “his family.” On hearing this, Badragiriyaṛ at once took the hint, wound up his belongings and departed in true style of a seeker!²¹³. Much of his poetry concerns the folly of man and guides him in a moving language to have complete control over the senses and direct his inner life Godward. He very much regrets having wasted his early life without understanding the abode of the Supreme.

*“You were within me and out of myself
I Searched for you here and there and everywhere”.*

²¹³ *Peria Jñāna Kōrvai* includes Badragiriyaṛ’s compositions in its collection of Siddha’s songs. If the grammarian Bhartr̥hari is thus to be identified as the Badragiriyaṛ, then, Paṭṭiṇattār’s date may be placed around the early 7th century C.E, the date the grammarian is said to have lived and died. For the purpose of this study of Tamil Siddhars, Paṭṭiṇattār may be regarded only as ascetic of the *Vēdāntic Jñānamārga* type with its “other-worldly” concerns for redemption and *vairāgya* for all worldly concerns, and as an ardent devotee of Śiva, and thus falling outside the “clan” of Siddhas proper. See S.A. Sarma, *Op.cit.*, pp.73-74

Paṭṭiṇattār chooses to take people Godward by telling them to the vanity and egoism of men and the ungodly and tempting nature of women. He finds woman a bag, her breasts two hanging dried up pouches and so on. The human body remaining distanced from godhead is a cow-shed of lust, stinking, home of falsehood, a treasury of insolence, and so forth.

Paṭṭiṇattār was one of the prominent *bhaktas* and Siddhas was a native of *Paṭṭiṇam*, literally meaning a coastal city. In those days, the name denoted Kāviri Pūmpaṭṭiṇam, the harbour and capital of the Cōḷā monarchs. His original name was Tiruveṅkāḍar. It is the name of Śiva enshrined in Tiruveṅkāḍu, a suburb of Kāviri Pūmpaṭṭiṇam. Being a merchant prince he amassed wealth through trade and led an affluent life. On the dawn of wisdom, he gave up all his wealth in charity and renounced the worldly life. He became a devotee of Śiva and also a great Siddha. He was also a great poet and mystic²¹⁴.

With regard to Paṭṭiṇattār, a contemporary of Cēndanār, scholars differ in the identity of the Siddha Paṭṭiṇattār with the hymnist Paṭṭiṇattar. The latter's five works on the shrines at Chidambaram, Sīrkālī, Tiruviḍaimarudūr, Kañci and Tiruvoṛṇiyūr are included in the anthology of the 11th *Tirumuṛai* of the Śaivites. He lived in the 10th century C.E. Another collection of poems of Paṭṭiṇattār goes by the name *Paṭṭiṇattār Pāḍal Tirattu*. This collection is included in the compilation of the poems of the Siddhas by some editors and hence treated to be the creation of Siddhar Paṭṭiṇattār. However, some scholars considered that this collection is the composition of a separate Paṭṭiṇattār, who lived after the Tirumūlar poet of the same name, already mentioned. Apart from these two, a third Paṭṭiṇattār, approved to be a real Siddha composed many poems with full of ethical, mystical and metaphysical thoughts which are collected under the title *Paṭṭiṇattār Jñānam*, admitted in the anthology of the Siddha poems. Nevertheless, the second and third Paṭṭiṇattār seem to be the same person on the basis of linguistic, grammatical and prosodial commonness found in their poems²¹⁵.

²¹⁴ S.N. Kandaswamy, *Op.cit*, p.56

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.20

Paṭṭiṇattār was a monotheist; but he identified the only one God with Śaiva, and also maintained the doctrine of metempsychosis, teaching that emancipation from future birth, and absorption into the Divine essence was the supreme bliss. He at the same time denied that man was a free-agent²¹⁶. It may be seen by the following stanzas.

O my heart! Do not be desponding. If thou wilt meditate on the five letters and devoutly worship Śaṅkara (Śiva), who dwells at Tillai; who fills the earth with his wisdom, who destroyed the (rebellious) cities; who is the lamp which is never extinguished; and who dances at the Sacred Court, surely thou shalt obtain liberation from future birth and be absorbed into his divine essence²¹⁷.

Oh Ekamba (Śiva) of Kachchi! Can I, an ignorant dog, know how many fathers, or how many mothers, or how many wives, of how many children I have had in the course of my former transmigrations, and how many more I shall have in my future?²¹⁸

Oh Ekamba of Kachchi? Will the puppet which is moved by a string, move by itself after the string shall have been broken? Am I not moved by thee in like manner? Therefore can I do anything by myself, if I am separated from thee?²¹⁹

There were, most probably, at least two poets bearing this name²²⁰ (which means ‘The one who belongs to the City’, that is, the City of Pukār or Kāverippaṭṭiṇam in Tamil literary history. Though he is not counted among the sixty-three canonized Śaivite saints -were included into the eleventh book of the Śaivite canon (*Tirumurai*). Another, who must be regarded as the greatest poet among the Siddhas. Though there are some common features of the two, the differences are more striking, both in the content and the form of their poetry. While Paṭṭiṇattār the Siddha adopts frequently common colloquial speech forms, and his prosody is simple and forceful, often the echo of folksongs, the earlier Paṭṭiṇattār (probably 10th Century)

²¹⁶ Simon Casie Chitty, *Op.cit.*, p. 78

²¹⁷ *Paṭṭiṇattār Pātalkaḷ*, Verse 60. English Translation by Simon Casie Chitty, *Op.cit*, p. 79

²¹⁸ *Ibid*, Verse 43. English Translation by Simon Casie Chitty, *Op.cit*, p. 79

²¹⁹ *Ibid*, Verse 4. English Translation by Simon Casie Chitty, *Op.cit*, p. 79

²²⁰ There were more than one Paṭṭiṇattār in Tamil Literary tradition. Paṭṭiṇattār I (c. 10th century) was but a Śaiva hymnist whose hymns are included in the 11th *Tirumurai*, had nothing to do with the Siddha tradition. Numbers of Siddha poems of different qualities are attributed to one Paṭṭiṇattār, and are included in the *Jñānakkōvai*, M. Arunachalam feels that the author of the first six poems in the *Ñānakkōvai* may belong to the 14th century and the author of the rest, whom he calls Paṭṭiṇattār, may belong to a still later period. A number of legends have gathered around the name of Paṭṭiṇattār, and we have three collections of them, treating him as a Siddha. See also M.Arunachalam, *Tamil Ilakkiya Varalāru-14th century*, pp. 370-2, 381-383.

uses only literary Tamil, and his poetry is of high style with unmistakable Siddhar spirit²²¹.

While, in the case of the later poet (most probably 14th-15th Century), one can find the characteristic features of an *Yōgic* ascetic, a man of revolt against Brahmanic and ritualistic social order, and a saint singing of the sadness in the world and accepting it with a kind of cheerful resignation. The earlier Paṭṭiṇattār, worshipping in many temples, shows definite affinity with the *bhakti* (devotional) schools of poetry. While the merit of our Paṭṭiṇattār's poems lies chiefly in their straight-forward forcefulness and sincerity, the poems of the earlier poet abound in charming descriptions and captivating images. In short, the five long pieces which found their way into the holy Śaivite writings are creations of a different hand than the one which composed the haunting Siddha songs.

In most of his poems, Paṭṭiṇattār the Siddha is the great relativist and the great pessimist of Tamil literature. Life is a tragedy an eternal interplay of contradictions, a lie, 'a tale told by an idiot'. Man is the seat of vileness and egoism, woman the great temptress. Her beauty is the most detestable thing on earth. The female body is a bag of filth. The belly compared by poets to a banyan leaf, is a shaking bag of dirt and dregs; the breasts, compared to lotus-buds, are in fact two hanging dried-up pouches parched by inner heat and scratched by the finger-nails of lusty men. The neck is full of sweat and dust and filth, and out of her hellish mouth spurts forth poison. But Paṭṭiṇattār's negative attitude towards the body is more that of a 'classical' *Yōgin* than that of a Siddha. While the early Tamil cīttar are full of confidence and self-respect, Paṭṭiṇattār manifests spiritual frustration and passionate longing for peace, even in death. Some of his 'beggary' stanzas have a charm of their own which has hardly been matched by any other piece of Tamil poetry²²². For many times, his poems show an evident antipathy to all women; and most of his songs show that they are the outcome of his frustrating experiences towards the worldly life. But the usual *yōgic* practices and their mystical experiences of the Tamil Siddhas are found less in the songs of Paṭṭiṇattār.

²²¹ K.A.N. Sastry, *Op.cit.*, pp. 95-96.

²²² Kamil V. Zvelebil, *The Smile of Murugan*, pp. 234-235

Pattirakiri (Bhadragiri)

Pattirakiri²²³ is one of the Tamil Siddhas, who was converted to Siddhism by Paṭṭiṇattār. He was a contemporary of Paṭṭiṇattār, but his real name is unknown. The word *bhadra* means beauty, grace, goodness, caution, safety and also an elephant. *Giri* means mountain. Hence the whole name connotes the sense of a determined and strong person with all spiritual values²²⁴. According to the legend, he was a king of Ujjain (*Ujjaini Māhakālam*). When Paṭṭiṇattār was absorbed in deep meditation in a shrine of Gaṇeśa, some thieves arrived and robbed the valuable ornaments of the king, then flung one of them to the God as an offering. But, it fell around the neck of Paṭṭiṇattār. When the government servants saw the royal ornament with the saint, he was caught as if he was a thief and was ordered to be fixed on the impaling stake. Then the innocent Paṭṭiṇattār recited a poem which indicated that all of this had happened as by the will of the divine, the stake caught fire and was burnt. Knowing his folly, the king fell at Paṭṭiṇattār's feet and accepted him as his preceptor. Subsequently he renounced his kingdom all his royal life and became an ascetic, accepting Paṭṭiṇattār as his spiritual *Guru*. Like Paṭṭiṇattār, Bhadragiri also abandoned all his worldly possession and became a naked *Sanniyāsi*. He begged for his bread from the villagers, enduring the privation of everything that could in any way have served to gratify his senses²²⁵.

Both Paṭṭiṇattār and Bhadragiri spent much time in Tiruvidaimarudūr practicing *Śivayōga*. As a saint poet and a Siddha, he shows many features common with Śivavākkīyar. He composed 237 distiches which go under the name Lamentations (Craving) for True Knowledge, '*Meyñāna Pulampal*'. The tone of the poem is one of high pitched wailing in the form of a couplet, filled with the sense of detachment, moral flavor and spiritual fervor²²⁶. M.Arunachalam assigns him to the 14th century on the basis of a reference to him by Kaṇṇuḍaiya Vaḷḷalār (C.E. 1425)²²⁷.

²²³ The name Patirakiri is probably a corruption of the Sanskrit name Bhartruhari. The Tamil poems may be said to belong to the Siddha School. He is said to be a disciple of Paṭṭiṇattār. It is must to distinguish between Paṭṭiṇattār, one of the authors of the works in eleventh *Śaiva Tirumurai*, which probably belong to the tenth century and the other, the author of the popular poems which cannot be earlier than the fifteenth century and which may be looked upon as works of the Siddha School. See Simon Casie Chitty, *Op.cit.*, p. 78

²²⁴ S. N. Kandaswamy, *Op.cit.*, p.55

²²⁵ Simon Casie Chitty, *Op.cit.*, p. 77

²²⁶ S. N. Kandaswamy, *Op.cit.*, p.55

²²⁷ M. Arunachalam, *Op.cit.*, p. 389.

His short stanzas are indeed pathetic and somewhat tiresome lamentations showing utter frustration, disgust, a longing for peace, deliverance, for the sleep of death. All end with the refrain *ekkālam* ‘when’- which means, when will come the time of his redemption? Like all other popular Tamil Siddhas, Bhadrāgiri also dealt with *ida-piṅkala*, *suśumna*²²⁸, *mūlādhāra*, drinking of nectar of immortality, *sat-cakras*, *pēroli*²²⁹; *aṣṭāṅga-yōga*, transmigration; *veṭṭaveli*, Sadāśiva²³⁰, etc.

Aruṇāgiri Nāthar

Aruṇāgiri Nāthar was an eminent poet, who from his entire devotedness to the worship of Śiva, renounced the world and assuming the life of an ascetic, lived and died at the Śiva fane at Tiruvaṇṇāmalai in Tamilnādu. He belonged to the family of *Dindima* which received the patronage of the Vijayanagara rulers in later times. Aruṇāgiri spent the major part of his life at Tiruvaṇṇāmalai. The hill was Aruṇāgiri means the red hill. Obviously the Siddha Aruṇāgirinātha was named after this sacred hill²³¹. His compositions are of a religious character and in praise of Skanda. They are as follows: *Kandan Alaṅgāram*, *Kandan Aṇubhūdi*, *Kandan Antādi*, *Tiruvaguppu* and *Tiruppugal*. This last work containing a series of 100 stanzas, being enriched by a splendid and harmonious flow of diction has gained great popularity amongst the Śaivas, who generally have it recited, when any member of their sect is at the point of death. Aruṇāgiri Nāthar was also the author of a short harmonic poem, entitled *Udaṛkūṟṟu Vaṇṇam*, descriptive of the different stages of human life²³².

This Tamil saint-poet and a Siddha belong to 14th century²³³. He was a staunch devotee of Lord Muruga. He was an exponent of Sanskrit and Tamil. He had also acquired mastery over various subjects like *Vēdas*, *Upaniṣads*, *Itihāsas*, *Purāṇas*, *Bhagavadgīta*, *Āgama*, *Mantra* and *tantra sāstras*, *yōga* etc. which has surely reflected in his works. He was leading a lavish life in his youth, later became an

²²⁸ *Patirakiri Pātalkal*, Verse 94, in Kōvēndhan, *Op.cit*, p. 188

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, Verses 95, 104, in Kōvēndhan, *Op.cit*, p. 189

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, Verses 148, 173, 198, in Kōvēndhan, *Op.cit*, pp. 192, 194 and 196 respectively

²³¹ R. Nagasamy, *Tantric Cult of South India*, pp. 64-65

²³² Simon Casie Chitty, *Op.cit*, pp. 14-15

²³³ Based on some epigraphical sources dated *saka* 1262 (1340 C.E.), R. Nagasamy gives a detailed account on date of the Aruṇāgirinātha, his contemporaries, his conflict with one Sambandāndān, and also dated that Aruṇāgiri might have born in 1300 C.E. for details see R. Nagasamy, *Tantric Cult of South India*, p. 65

ascetic and became a devotee of Lord Muruga. He then started worshipping Lord Śaṅmukha and devoting all his time in chanting his sacred name for a long time. At last, he wanted to surrender his life at the feet of Lord Subramanyā by way of suicide. With the intention of ending his life he jumped from the tall *gōpura* of the temple of Śri Aruṇāchalēśvara, popularly called as Aṇṇāmalai in Tamil. Then Lord Muruga appeared and rescued him. Then he travelled widely throughout South India, North India and Śri Laṅka visiting all most all Murugaṇ shrines. He sang as many as 16,000 songs in praise of the Lord Muruga. He visited as many as 226 Murugaṇ temples and sang *Tiruppugal*. He composed the famous *Tiruppugal*, consisting of over 1360 songs in various meters handled with utmost skill and characterized by a charming lilt. The diction is highly Sanskritised and the imagery vivid. The author's intimate knowledge of the sacred lore of Hinduism is evident in every song. His mention of Praudhadēva Rāya places him in the 15th century²³⁴. His songs betray evidence of a youthful life of libertinism followed by remorse. As he accepted Muruga or Kārtikēya as the supreme deity, he followed the philosophy of Śaiva Siddhānta system. He seems to have visited all the shrines of Muruga and been particularly attached to Paḷaṇi which figures largely in the *Tiruppugal*. He was perhaps also author of shorter devotional poems, all in praise of Muruga²³⁵. The *Tiruppugal* of Aruṇagiri and other Siddhar compositions came to be accommodated in orthodox Carnatic concerts²³⁶.

An abridged translation of it in English by the Rev. Mr. Robert in his *Oriental Illustration of the Sacred Scriptures* is as follows:

“The beginning of man is as a dew-drop falling from the tip of a blade of grass; he assumes his corporeal form in the womb of his mother, in the course of ten months and is then brought forth; he lies down, crawls, prattles, walks, and becomes acquainted with science. At sixteen he is in the bloom of youth; goes forth richly dressed, and adorned with jewels, courts the society of young women, is ravished by their eyes, lets himself loose to all irregularities and squanders his wealth. His youth now passes away and old age creeps on; his hair turns grey, his teeth drop, his eyes grow dim, his organs of hearing are impaired, his body becomes dry, his back bends, and he is troubled with incessant cough, which disturbs his sleep. He is no longer able to walk, and has recourse to a cane, and is gazed at by the young with derision. While in this condition, the ministers of Yama, with their shaggy

²³⁴ K.A.N. Sastry, *Op.cit*, p. 135. He also refers about one Sōmanāthadēva matha. But not much information is available about that. For details see R. Nagasamy, *Tantric Cult of South India*, p. 65

²³⁵ K.A.N. Sastry, *Op.cit*, p. 135.

²³⁶ N. Subrahmanian, *The Tamils*, Madras, 1996, p. 182

hair and frightful countenance, approach him, and seize and bear away his life amidst the screams of his wife and children. His kinsfolk and friends then assembled, talk of his good or evil deeds, convey his body to the burning ground with the sound of tom-toms, and commit it to the flame which consumes and reduces it to a handful of ashes”²³⁷.

Like Tirumūlanātha, he is also called with the suffix ‘nātha’ as Aruṇagirinātha, seems to indicate that he belonged to the tradition of the Nātha tradition, as well as he frequently refers about various aspects of Śakti in his songs, which tempted to suggest him as the follower of the Śākta tradition. Whatever it may be, he made an independent, powerful and devotional movement in praise Skanda with a strong base of Śākta tradition. In many of his songs, Aruṇagiri mentioned about various forms of Śakti while he praising Skanda as the child of this universal mother²³⁸. Thus, Aruṇagiri though was a staunch devotee of Lord Muruga; he was celebrated as a great Siddha by all sorts of Hindu traditions. Evidently, even today, more than a shrine dedicated to Lord Muruga, the Tiruppugal of Siddha Aruṇagiri is sung in the centres and shrines dedicated to the Siddhas.

Siddha Bōgar

Bōgar was one of the celebrated Tamil Siddhas whose antiquity and biography has merged into fable. He was well versed in poetry and medicine. Some of his works are *Bōgar yōgamārgam*, *Bōgar Eḷunūru*, *Bōgar Tirumandiram* and *Bōgar Niḡandu*. These entire works are dealing with the preparations of several kinds of medicines. Some think doubtfully that he was Fo or Fohi, the person who introduced Buddhism into China in the latter part of the first century C.E.²³⁹. Bōgar is the disciple of Kālaṅgi Nāthar who was one of the pupils of the great Tirumūlar. Tradition says that he was one of those who went overseas and visited a number of places including Rome in search of medicinal herbs. According to a later version, he was a staunch devotee of the Muruga cult. When one of his pupils Karuvūr Dēvar (*Koṅgumaṇḍala Satakam* 34) installed a shrine at Tañjāvūr in honour of Śiva, Bōgar is said to have sent a note (*Ōlai*) for the occasion apparently a message of good wishes for the occasion.

²³⁷ Simon Casie Chitty, *Op.cit.*, p. 16; The Tamil version of this song is now almost sung in all Siddha centres either vocally or in recorded form.

²³⁸ R. Nagasamy, *Tantric Cult of South India*, p. 65

²³⁹ However, many of his works are not included in many editions of the siddha poems. See Simon Casie Chitty, *Op.cit.*, p. 90

Legends also connected him with the places like Saduragiri and Śivagiri as their abodes. Saṭṭaimuṇi, Koṅgaṇar, Sundarānandar and Pulippāṇi of Paḷaṇi (Vaikānagar) were his pupils. It is popularly said that he spent his part of his life at Paḷaṇi hills as evinced by the existence of Bōgar *Samādhi*. Bōgar's works were several. The popularly known among them are *Bōgar 7000*, *Bōgar Nighaṇtu* 17000 and. A work on *Yōga* called *Bōgar Yōgam* 700²⁴⁰.

Koṅkumaṇḍala Satakam says that Siddhar Bōgar and Pulippāṇi were lived at Vaigā Nagar which is popularly known as Paḷaṇi is a part of Koṅkumaṇḍalam²⁴¹. There is a separate shrine dedicated to Siddha Bōgar near the Paḷaṇiāṇḍavar shrine in the hill top. Tirumūlar in his *Tirumantiram* gives us no more detail about this Bōgar than to say that he was a contemporary pontiff of one of the seen *sanmārga mathas*. Though Bōgar himself has left no autobiographical detail, a late tradition makes him the guru of Tirumāḷigai Dēvar and Karuvūr Dēvar, two Śaiva hymnists of c.10th-11th century and weaves many legends around them. However, the hymns of these two alleged disciples do not bear out this tradition.

In contradiction to this, one Sundarānadar says that Bōgar was born at Paraṅgiyūr, studied with Mūlar the *Vāmācāra* Śāktism, for the active practice of which he was often in quest of beautiful damsels". Because of this practice, Bōgar says that he earned this name. Besides teaching the *Vāmācāra* to Koṅgaṇar and Karuvūrār, he ordered them to get him every day beautiful young women for his own *vāmācāra* practices, Bōgar adds, "one day these two disciples brought beautiful stone image of a women and so I angrily cursed them to become crows". According to another tradition, Bōgar of Saduragiri had 557 disciples, and among them only Koṅgaṇar and Karuvūrār seem to have been prominent both inside and outside the Siddha tradition. Besides, he is reputed as the maker of the idol of Daṇḍapāṇi at Paḷaṇi with *navapāśāṇa*²⁴². A *cakra*

²⁴⁰ V. Ramachandra Dikshitar, *Op.cit.*, pp. 162-167

²⁴¹ *Yōga vaithiyaṇḍi solrasa vāda melākkalaiyunth Dēga nilaipuru ṇ kāyakaṇ paṇkaḷeṇ siddhiyuṇḍisol Bōga rudan Pulip pāṇi mudaliya puṇyarelā Māga muṇavamar vaigā nagar Koṅku maṇḍalamē*. Karmega Kavingar, *Koṅkumaṇḍala Satakam*, verse 36, (Tamil), in T.A. Muttusamy Konar, (ed.) Sadhu Press, Chennai, 1923, p.39

²⁴² There exists a doubt among the scholars that the Daṇḍāyutapāṇi who enshrined on the top of the Paḷaṇi hill is really Murukaṇ or only a Siddha God. Because it is to be noted that the deity on the hill carries a *taṇṭa* (a staff) instead *Vēl* or the spear which is an usual and essential attribute of Lord Murukaṇ. See N. Subrahmanian, *Tamil Social History*, Vol. I, Institute of Asian Studies, Chennai, 1997, p. 364

and an emerald *linga*, supposed to have been worshipped by this Siddha are housed in a shrine, which contains his tomb, at Paḷaṇi. He claims to have met Kālāṅgi in China, got initiated into Siddhism and visited Mecca and Jerusalem²⁴³.

In the Tamil encyclopedia *Abithāna-chinthāmaṇi*, it is said that he was a Chinese by birth and a Buddhist by faith. From China, he travelled widely and reached India 1500 years ago. He stayed at Pāṭali (Pāṭna) and Gayā, the holy spots of Buddhism for some time. Then he came to South India and lived there for a very long period practising and propagating *Yōga*²⁴⁴. He initiated many persons into the discipline of *Yōga* who later became prominent Siddhas. He installed the idol of Paḷaṇi Āṇḍavar (Muruga, son of Śiva), made out of *navapāśāṇas* (poisons) being the product of nine secret herbal and chemical ingredients which made the idol harder than the granite stone. In the Tamil tradition Bōgar is held in high esteem for his boundless devotion to Muruga as the principle of *Aumkāra*. He spent his last days in the Hills of Paḷaṇi where he entered into eternal absorption and beautitude. Those, who do not subscribe to the view that Bōgar was a Chinese by birth, agree that he visited China many times.

Bōgar is said to have lived during third to fifth centuries C.E., and practiced and taught alchemy. Traditions concerning Bōgar cast him either as a Chinese philosopher who came to India for the study of medicine, traveling first to Patna and Bodhgaya before taking up residence in Madras; or as a south Indian Sittar, who traveled to China and taught alchemy to a ruler named Koṅg (Koṅgaṇar?) before returning to south India²⁴⁵.

Sometimes Bōgar is also connected with the Buddhist monks such as Bōdhidharma and Paramārtha, being natives of Kāñci carried the message of *Tāntric* Buddhism, an off-shoot of the *Yōgācārā* system to China from there it spread to other parts of Asia including Japan. Even in the period of the later Cōḷās, the commercial and cultural contact between Tamilnādu and China thrived as evidenced from the fact

²⁴³ R.Venkataman in his work classified Bōgar into Bōgar I, II and III based on the chronology. For more details about the chronology of Bōgar see R.Venkataraman, *Op.cit.*, p. 52

²⁴⁴ S.N. Kandasamy, *Op.cit.*, p.63

²⁴⁵ David Gordon White, *The Alchemical Body*, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 2004, p.61.

that Rājarāja Cōlā-I and his son Rājēndra Cōlā-I patronized the Buddhist pagoda at Nāgapattinam in the eastern coast where the Chinese traders brought their merchandise in exchange for South Indian commodities. So, it becomes evident that Bōgar's contact with China cannot be treated as a myth, but can be construed as a fact. The tradition holds the view that Bōgar practiced *yōga* at Katirgāmam, the sacred spot of Lord Muruga in the southern Śrī Laṅka²⁴⁶.

Some of the tradition says that he came to India in the 3rd century C.E.²⁴⁷, visited Arabia, and got some of his pupils initiated in Chinese mechanical and alchemical arts by sending them to China. It is said that he himself went to China with them. Tamiḷ works mention Bōgar's name and also that of his disciple Pulippāṇi who came with him and settled in South India. Quite a large number of works were left by the Tamiḷ Sittars but only a few are now in print²⁴⁸. Thus, there exists numerous fictions on Bōgar, but none of them are useful to trace his biographical details. Besides, most of them remain mere folk tales without any historical values.

Siddha Pulippāṇi

Pulippāṇi Siddha is said to be the disciple of Siddha Bōgar. As already stated Bōgar and Pulippāṇi, were lived at Vaigā nagar, the other name of Paḷaṇi, and belongs to the part of *Koṅkumaṇḍalam*²⁴⁹. A separate shrine is dedicated to Siddha Pulippāṇi under the foothills of Paḷaṇi. Interesting thing in the following verse from the *Pulippāṇi Pātal Tiraṭṭu*, the period of these siddhars is mentioned as *kaliyuga* 205.

In the *Pulippāṇi Pātal Tiraṭṭu*, Siddha Pulippāṇi, he himself says that he was the disciple of Bōgar and under him; he learned the arts of eight *siddhis* and other

²⁴⁶ S.N. Kandasamy, *Op.cit.*, p.64

²⁴⁷ The date of Bōgar is doubtful.

²⁴⁸ As stated by Bhattacharyya, Most of the works are scattered as manuscripts which are to be found in Madras Oriental Manuscript Library, Sarabhoji Maharaja's Library at Tañjāvūr, Āduthurai Matha at Tañjāvūr and at various South Indian Mathas. In 1951, D.V. Subha Reddy published a list of 27 works indicating the nature of their contents, originally published by W. Ainslie in *Madras Medical Journal*, Vol II, No. 2 adding an extra list of 38 Tamil books composed by the Sittars. See N.N. Bhattacharyya, *History of the Tantric Religion*, Manohar, New Delhi, 1999 (2nd ed.), p. 39

²⁴⁹ *Yōga vaithiyaṇṇ solrasa vāda melākkalaiyunth Dēga nilaiparuṇ kāyakar paṇkaḷeṇ siddhiyuṇṇsol Bōga rudan Pulip pāṇi mudaliya puṇyarelā Māga muṇavamar vaigā nagar Koṅku maṇḍalamē. See Karmega Kavingar, Koṅkumaṇḍala Satakam*, verse 36, (Tamil), in T.A. Muttusamy Konar, (ed.) Sadhu Press, Chennai, 1923, p. 39

miracle powers²⁵⁰. The song also says that Bōgar has numerous disciples like Tirumāḷigaidēvar, Karūr Siddhar, Pulippāṇi and others. Of them Tirumāḷigaidēvar embraced the Śaiva religion and Karūrdēvar adopted the *vāmācārā* path of Śaivism. The 34th verse of the *Koṅkumaṇḍala Satakam* refers about his presence at Brahādīśvara temple at Tañjāvūr at the time of its *aṣṭabhandana*.

Popular tradition says that Pulippāṇi was a Chinese who was initiated by Bōgar in the art of *Siddhayōga*, and he became his ardent disciple. Often he has been identified with Vyāgrapāda, the devotee of Natarāja. It seems that this hypothesis is based partially on the semantics of these words. But it is to be borne in mind that Vyāgrapāda is known in the 11th *Tirumurai* as *Pulikkālar*, i.e., the Saint with tiger's feet. Since he used to ride on a tiger (Puli), he was named Pulippāṇi²⁵¹. He was a staunch devotee of Lord Muruga in the abode of Paḷaṇi Hills. Following the guidelines of his master Bōgar, he practised *Yōga* and attained many *siddhis*. The official priests of the Paḷaṇi Āṇḍavar shrine at the Paḷaṇi Hills hailed from the lineage of Pulippāṇi Siddhar²⁵². However, during the period of Tirumalai Nāyak, the ruler of Madurai region his minister Rāmappa Aiyar changed the tradition by inducting some Brahmin priests from the adjacent Koṅgu Dēsam in the 17th century C.E. However, the descendants of Pulippāṇi Cittar maintain the *samādhi* shrine of Bōgar within the same temple and a *āshram* nearby where their predecessors are buried even in the present day²⁵³.

²⁵⁰ ‘*Thāṇāṇa Śivagiriyaṭ Thaṇḍayudhapāṇi dhādhāvaip pūṣithōr Brahman Indiran Thēṇāṇa Bōgarudaṇ ivarkaḷ mūvar teḷivāka muṇyugathil mūvarappā, Kōṇāṇa kaliyugam irunūṟṟainthil koṟṟavaṇē Pulippāṇi pūṣithēṇpār Māṇāṇa aṭṭasiddhi kōdasakti maindhanē cittarida nadaṇanthāṇē*’, *Pulippāṇi Pāṭal Tiraṭṭu*, cited in T.A. Muttusamy Konar, (ed.), *Koṅkumaṇḍala Satakam*, (Tamil), Sadhu Press, Chennai, 1923, p. 40

²⁵¹ One of the feats of the siddhas was the taming and controlling of the fearful and terrific animals like the lion, tiger, boar and elephant. Hence, Pulippāṇi's mount being a tiger may not be a myth.

²⁵² R. Venkataraman put forth a legend about Pulippāṇi that one Śivaliṅga Uḍaiyār from the Kannada country came to Paḷaṇi, became Bōgar's disciple and acquired *aṣṭa-siddhis*. Bōgar handed over the duty of the ritual worship of Daṇḍāyudapāṇi to Pulippāṇi and retired to a nearby cave for penance. Once when the *abhishēka patra* broke on the way down hill, Pulippāṇi carried water in his cupped palm, reached the shrine quickly riding on the back of a tiger, and fulfilled the daily ritual. Pleased with his disciple's resourcefulness, Bōgar gave him the title Pulippāṇi Patra Uḍaiyār. R.Venkataraman, *Op.cit.*, p. 65

²⁵³ S.N. Kandasamy, *Op.cit.*, p.26

Siddha Karuvūrār

Siddha Karuvūrār is considered to be one among the eighteen Siddhars who belonged to the late 17th century. His name itself reveals that he hailed from Karuvūr, the modern Karūr district of Tamilnādu. His real name is unknown. He was both a *bhakta* and a Siddha. He performed many wonders. He is intimately associated with Siddha Bōgar²⁵⁴. He describes Śāktism vividly in his works. Though nothing is known about this Siddha except that he was a disciple of Bōgar of Saduragiri²⁵⁵ and that he was a *Śākta*. The *Koṅgumaṇḍala Śatakam*, which may belong to 17th century, clubs Siddha Karuvūrār with Karuvūr Dēvar who belongs to c. 10th Century. It says that Karuvūrār, as the great Siddha born in Karuvūr in the *Koṅgumaṇḍalam*; he achieved the *aṣṭabhandana* merely by spitting his *tāmbula*²⁵⁶; he made a tree shower fish and he wrote the *Tiruvīsaippā*. However, there are no proper details available in the above said work regarding the places and circumstances under which these events took place. Later, based on these references, many legends were developed elaborately by an anonymous author of the *Karuvūr Purāṇam*²⁵⁷.

The chronological problem was further complicated by the writings of other scholars like S. R. Balasubramaniyan connects Karuvūr Dēvar with the Cōlā King Rājarāja I and says that the former was the spiritual *guru* of Rājarāja I²⁵⁸. It is also claimed that Karuvūr Dēvar along with the Cōlā King Rājarāja has been represented

²⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p.57

²⁵⁵ This Bōgar belongs to 17th century, he was the *Guru* and a contemporary of Karuvūrār. According to Sundarānandar, this Bōgar was born at Paraṅgiyūr, studied with Mūlar the *Vāmācāra Śāktism*, for the active practice of which he was often in quest of beautiful damsels. It is said, because of this practice Bōgar earned this name. Besides teaching the *Vāmācāra* to Koṅgaṇar and Karuvūrār, he ordered them to get him every day beautiful young women for his own *Vāmācāra* practices. There are several opinions about the periodicity and numbers of Bōgar. For more details see R. Venkataraman, *Op.cit.*, p. 52

²⁵⁶ *Aṣṭabandha* consists of eight ingredients to fix the idols firmly at its base. If the ratio of those eight ingredients is differed or not mixed properly, then the idols will not fix correctly. It is said Karuvūrār installed the *liṅga* of the Brahādīsvara temple by merely spitting his *tāmbula* which consists of betel leaves, arecanut and a slight amount of lime, is meant for chewing. According to R. Venkataraman, the eight ingredients are 1. *Karuṅkuṅgilyam* (resin of black dammar tree), 2. *Kāvikkal* (red ochre), 3. *Kombarakku* (stick lac), 4. *Maisatchi* (Indian *bedellium*), 5. *Sempaṇḍu* (Brazil cotton), 6. *Sukkān Kal* (limestone), 7. *Tēn meḷugu* (bee's wax) and 8. *Vellaikkūṅgilyam* (resin of Piney varnish tree). see R. Venkataraman, *op.cit.*, Appendix 13, p. 229.

²⁵⁷ R. Venkataraman, *op.cit.*, pp. 56-57.

²⁵⁸ But no epigraphical records or contemporary literary sources attest this fact. S. R. Balasubrahmanyam, *op.cit.*, p. 31,34; see also R. Champakalakshmi, *Tradition, Dissent and Ideology: Essays in Honour of Romila Thapar*, OUP, New Delhi, 1996, p. 147

in stone and in murals found inside the sanctum walls of the Tañjāvūr temple²⁵⁹, and also says that he was that Karuvūr Dēvar who had sung eleven verses on the glory of the Lord of Rājarājēśvaram in his *Tiruviśaippā*²⁶⁰, a poetical composition. In Tañjāvūr, Karuvūr Dēvar is depicted like a rich person with more ornaments and royal look. But in the murals found inside fourth tire of the *Gōpura* of Tirupudaimarudur temple (near Ambāsamudram of Tirunelveli District) which probably belong to 17th century, depicting a scene of Karuvūr Dēvar near a Gaṇēśa shrine and crossing a river and showing his hands like stopping the women who follows him. This mural contains the captions in it and in the above said scene the name is written as Karuvūr Dēvar. He is wearing long *rudrākṣamālās* in his neck and also in his head which rounded in his hair dress. A red turban was tied in his head. He smeared holy ashes in his body. He is wearing only a *dhoti* from his waist to knee and holding a staff in his hand²⁶¹.

The continuity of the Siddha tradition is visible in its best form again in the same Brahadīśvara temple. A small shrine with the sculpture of Karuvūrār consecrated on the backside of the Sanctum of the Brahadīśvara temple²⁶² is now one of the most popular spots of worship. Because, this name not only refers to the Karuvūr Dēvar (c.11th-12th century), a poet of the Śaiva Bhakti School, but also denotes a Karuvūr Siddha (c.17th century C.E.), a member of *Kāyasiddha* School²⁶³. So there is a probability to think that both Karuvūr Dēvar and Karuvūr Siddha are

²⁵⁹ B. Venkataraman, *Rājarājēśvaram: The Pinnacle of Cōlā Art*, Mudgala Trust, Madras, 1985, p. 231; for sculptural representation in stone see p. 162, Fig. 25B and for mural representation see Fig. 11B. In p.119, he gave the list of mural paintings with chamber numbers and the paintings of Rājarāja I and Karuvūr Dēvar according to this author is in Chamber No.10, inner jamb facing north.

²⁶⁰ A. V. Subramania Aiyar states that “There is a Śaivite tradition that Tirumāligai Dēvar and Karuvūr Dēvar, whose poems are found in the ninth *Tirumurai* were *Siddhars*. It is said that the later performed a miracle during the installation ceremony of the big temple at Tañjāvūr. But there is no indication in their poems that they have the outlook of the Siddhars”. See A. V. Subramania Aiyar, *The Poetry and the Philosophy of the Tamil Siddhars: An Essay in Criticism*, S. Mahadevan Publisher, Tirunelveli, 1957, p. 7 (FN). Similarly, in contradiction to the above statement there found thirty verses called *Karuvūrār Pūjā Vithi* in the collection of Siddha songs as written by Karuvūrār. These thirty songs dealt with *yōga*, *pūjā* and *śakti* worship and no references found on Tañjāvūr or on its related. Kōvēndhan, *Op.cit.*, pp. 338-345.

²⁶¹ Kudavayil Balasubramaniam, *op.cit.*, p. 42

²⁶² Karuvūr Dēvar shrine is the last addition inside the courtyard is a small shrine built at the beginning of the 20th century to honour Karuvūr Dēvar who wrote *Tiruviśaippā*, the sacred hymns to praise the Lord of Rājarājēśvaram during the Cōlā period. See Kudavāyil Balasubramaniam, *op.cit.*, p. 38

²⁶³ Tamil Siddhas are classified into three viz. *Ñānasiddhas*, *Kāyasiddhas* and *Sanmārgasiddhas*. And Karuvūrār belongs to the second group. R. Venkataraman, *op.cit.*, pp. passim.

different persons and the former is the *Bhakti* poet, who has sung eleven poems on this temple and they are included in the *Tiruviṣṣpā*; and the latter one is the Siddha who composed thirty songs on *yōga* and *Pūjāvithi*. However, this statue was installed only half a century ago²⁶⁴. Similarly, the confusion also caused regarding the period and caste of Karuvūrār. The *Sthalapuranas* began to club Karuvūr Dēvar (11th century), a hymnist with Karuvūr Siddhar (16th century), a member of the Siddha cult, and this create many new legends²⁶⁵. Regarding his caste, the list of eighteen Siddhas with their (imaginary) pictures displayed in Sarasvathi Mahāl of Tañjāvūr²⁶⁶ mention that Karuvūrār belongs to the *Kudimagan* or *Panikar* caste. But, some Tamil works mentions that he belongs to the *Kannāra* group (gold smith?) who made the *Pañcalōha* icons; and somebody says that he belongs to the Brahmin community²⁶⁷. Though there exists an enigma regarding the date and personality of Karuvūrār, the Siddha cult in Tañjāvūr is now attaining too popular than that of the Śaivism. More number of devotees now started worshipping Siddha Karuvūrār whose shrine installed behind the Sanctum of the Brihadīśvara temple in Tañjāvūr.

Among the authors of the hymns found in this collection of *Tiruvīśaipā*, Tirumāḷigai Tēvar, Karuvūr Tēvar and Sēndaṇār deserve special mention. According to the *sthalapurāṇa* of Tiruvāvaḍuturai Karuvūr Tēvar practised *yōga* in this sacred place. His spiritual preceptor Bōgar initiated Tirumāḷigai Tēvar and Karuvūr Tēvar in the methods of worshipping their respective favorite aspects or forms of God, Natarāja and Parāśakti. Heeding the preceptor's command, Tirumāḷigai Tēvar

²⁶⁴ But still, there are no contemporary records or any temple inscriptions so far found mentioning the details of Rājārāja's and Karuvūr Dēvar's personality and their physical features. R. Venkatraman, *Op.cit.*, p. 12

²⁶⁵ R. Venkatraman, *Op.cit.*, p. 4

²⁶⁶ The list of 18 Siddhas portrayed as imaginary picture in Tañjāvūr Sarasvathi Mahāl is given with their Name, place and caste respectively. They are 1. Tirumūlar – Tillai – Tachar (carpenter); 2. Danvaṇtri – Vaithīsvarakoil – Vaṇigar (Trader); 3. Koṇgaṇavar – Tirupathi – Kosavar (Potter); 4. Kodumba Siddhar (Kudambai Siddhar) – Māyavaram (Mayilādudurai) – Kārai kāttar; 5. Rāmadēvar – Aḷagarmalai – Reddy; 6. Vālmīgar – Reddykudi – Vēduvan (Hunter); 7. Patañjali – Ramēśvaram – Chetty; 8. Karuvūrār – Karuvūr – *Kudimagan* Jāti/ Paṇikar; 9. Kumbamuṇi – Tiruvanandapuram – Brahmana; 10. Kamalamuṇi – Tiruvalur – Kannār Jāti (Black Smith?); 11. Nandidēvar – Kāsi – Brahmana; 12. Gōrakar – Poiyur – Vaṇigar (Trader); 13. Edakattār (Edaikathar) – Tiruvaṇṇāmalai – Idayar (Shepherd); 14. Bōgar – Paḷaṇi – Kosavanar (Potter); 15. Saṭṭamuṇi – Sriraṅgam – Seniyar Jāti; 16. Pāmbāṭṭi – Tirukadaiyur – Sēdar Jāti; 17. Macchamuṇi – Tiruparaṅkundram – Sembadavar (fisherman); and 18. Sundaranandar – Madurai – Reddy.

²⁶⁷ See Ganamanjari Sambathkumar, *Sivamayam Kanda Siddhargal*, Sri Indhu Publications, Chennai, 2008, p. 95; C. S. Murugesan, *Pathinen Siddhargal Varalaru*, Kuruṇji, Chennai, 2008, p. 84; and S. P. Ramachandiran, *Siddhargal Varalaru*, Thamarai Noolagam, Chennai, 2002, pp. 96-97

arranged separate spots for the *Navakōḍi* Siddhas and for himself to enter into *samādhi-yōga*²⁶⁸. Hence the holy town Tiruvāvaḍuṭurai got the name Navakōdi-cittarpuram.

According to the *sthalapurāṇa*, Karuvūr tēvar visited the Potiyil Hills and was blessed by the Siddha Agastya. It is said that the orthodox priests did not allow him to enter the temple at Karuvūr, despising him to be a follower of *vāmacāra* and also an immoral person. Karuvūr Tēvar acted as if he feared them, reached the sanctum sanctorum and embraced the *Śiva-liṅga* and disappeared. His idol has been installed in the *prakāra* of the shrines of Paśupatēśvara at Karuvūr and Brhadēśvara at Tañjāvūr. In the name of Karuvūr Tēvar many works on medicine and Siddhalogy are available²⁶⁹.

The *Koṅgumaṇḍala śatakam* clubs him with Karuvūr Dēvar²⁷⁰ (c. 10th century) and says:²⁷¹ ‘Karuvūrār, the great Siddha born in Karuvūr in the *Koṅgumaṇḍalam*, (i) achieved the *aṣṭabandana* merely by spitting his *tāmbūla*,²⁷² (ii) made a tree shower fish and (iii) wrote the *Tiruvīsaippā*²⁷³. The Karūr Siddhar, who made *aṣṭabhandana* through his saliva, and did a miracle of fish raining from a tree, and he who sung the *Tiruvīsaippa*, was born at Karūr is also belongs to the *Koṅku Maṇḍalam*²⁷⁴. Further, the *Koṅkumaṇḍala Satakam* gives following accounts on the life of Karūr Siddhar that, “He was born in a Brahmin family. After keenly observing and thoroughly learning the world religious, came to the conclusion that the Śaiva religion as the best one to follow. He visited many temples and sung his *Tiruvīsaippa*. Well versed in *Śivayōga*. Whether he was enjoying with women or under deep meditation, he lived without any desire like

²⁶⁸ *navakōḍi cittarkku ellām iḍaṅgal nāṅgu amaiya-p-paṇṇi civacamayattai nālum vaḷarttu narceygai yōḍum tavamali nīṟṟin cārbu ulāittiṭa-c-camāti yōgam uvagaiyō ḍiyaṟṟi mūla eḷuttu aintum ōdi...* S.N. Kandaswamy, *Op.cit.*, p.18

²⁶⁹ S.N. Kandaswamy, *Op.cit.*, p.19

²⁷⁰ He is a Śaiva hymnist, whose songs are included in the *Tiruvīsaippā*, the ninth book of the Śaiva canon.

²⁷¹ *Koṅgumaṇḍala Śatakam*: 34.

²⁷² *Tāmbūla*, consisting of betel leaves, arecanut and a slight amount of lime, is meant for chewing.

²⁷³ For a summary of these legends, vide., Appendix-1. The author of this *Purāṇam* calls himself ‘a disciple of Sattiyānāiyār’ (V.Krishnasamy: *Tamiḷil Talapurāṇa ilakkiyam*, p. 140), who lived c. 1700 C.E., (S.A. Ramasamy Pulavar : *Tamil Pulavar Agaravarisai*, Vol.2)

²⁷⁴ *Vāitham palavechchi lālaṭṭa bhandana māṇpuramīn./ Kāiththu maraṇchori yachcheithu pathi kaṇinthu senthēṇ Thōiththa Tiruvīsaip pāppā torusiddhar Thōṇṇivara./ Vāitha Karuvūrpathisēva thuṇKoṅku maṇḍalamē.* Karmega Kavingar, *Koṅgumaṇḍala Satakam*, verse 34, (Tamil), in T.A. Muttusamy Konar, (ed.) Sadhu Press, Chennai, 1923, p. 37

a lotus leaf in the water. When he reached the Tirukurukūr of Pāṇḍya country, Lord Tirumāl (Viṣṇu) appeared in one of his devotee and instructed him to invite and provide hospitality to the Karūr Siddhar. The goddesses Kālī offered him the liquor, when he wishes to get it from the Śiva. He made the *Vaṇṇi* tree to rain fish. He met Agastya at Pothigai hills. As per Bōgar's instruction, he made *aṣṭabhandana* by mere spitting his chewed betel nut paste in the Brahādīśvara temple at Tañjāvūr. He ate the thousand men's food and appeased their hunger. He called lord Raṅganātha and got this valuable pearl garland, then offered it to the temple *dāsi*. The Brahmins of Karūr reported to the king that he is eating meat and consuming liquors. When the king examined him, all the liquor pots and meat plates are found in the houses of the Brahmins who reported against him. When the Brahmins of his village chased him to kill, Karūr siddhar ran across the Āmbra River and merged with the *Śivaliṅga*²⁷⁵. References about Karūr Siddhar are also found in *Tiruvāvaduthurai Purāṇam*²⁷⁶ and *Kārūr Purāṇam*²⁷⁷.

Kaṇjamalai Siddhar

Tamiḻ tradition records that one Kaṇjamalai Siddhar happens to be one of the seven students of Tirumūla Nāyaṇār. Reference is also found in *Tirumandiram* about this Kaṇjamalai Siddhar²⁷⁸. Kaṇjamalaiyan belonged to the hill-tribe of Kaṇjamalai, now called Siddhar Kōil. But none of his works or references about him is found in the *Periya Jñāna Kōvai*. According to *Koṅkumaṇḍala Satakam*, Kaṇjamalai is located in between Paruthipaḷḷi Nādu, one of the adjacent *Nādus* of the Pūnturai Nādu, and Rāsipura Nādu's adjacent *nādus* like Salēm Nādu and Pūvāṇya Nādu. In this Kaṇjamalai hills, every year in the Tamiḻ month on Māsi, *Valalai* (*pūnīr*) is growing and diseased persons from various parts of the country visiting here to get that

²⁷⁵ T.A. Muttusamy Konar, (ed.), *Koṅkumaṇḍala Satakam*, (Tamil), *Op.cit*, p. 37

²⁷⁶ *Vāguru Cōlaṇ maṇamakilṇ tīraṇcha vaḷamigu māvudai yālō dērkelu Śivaliṇ kampuṇarndh daruḷa veliḷperu maṭṭabandhaṇa naṇ pākilai suvaitha pasaiyiṇai yumilṇthu paṇbodu mirukidap payirri mōkamō tarasa nākkiya vamutha muḷudhumuṇ duyirtoru nirappi*. See T.A. Muttusamy Konar, (ed.), *Op.cit*, p. 37

²⁷⁷ *Enravar kavaḷath thutka vēinthu Siṇṇilaik duṇṇu niṇṇatōr vaṇṇi taṇṇai nītaru keṇra pōḷthin miṇṇaru vāṇam pūththa mīnila meitha lēippa vaṇṇanith thathuyar mēlōr karuthiṇai yaḷavu kāṇbār*. see T.A. Muttusamy Konar, (ed.), *Op.cit*, p. 37

²⁷⁸ *Manthiram peṇṇa vaḷimurai mālāṇkan, Indiran Sōman Brahman Rudran Kanduruk Kālāṅgi Kaṇjamalaiyaṇōdu, Intha eḷuvarum eṇvaḷi yāmē*. see *Tirumandiram* verse 132

vaḷalai²⁷⁹. Another verse of *Koṅkumaṇḍala Satakam* says that Kañjamalai Siddhar belongs to the tradition of Tirumūlar, who wrote *Tirumandiram*, which is an essence of the *āgamas* that originated from the face of the Sadāśivamūrthy. The Kañjamalai, where the Kañjamalai siddhar lives, and the medicinal plants grows are belongs to the Koṅkumaṇḍala region²⁸⁰. The place is surrounded by forests of sacred *kuśa* grass, *Taruppai pull*, and hence the name *kuśalapatti*, while its forests of *Erithrina Indica*, *kalyāṇa murungai maram*, with its distinctly green leaves and bright red flowers, gave its name Murungaipatti. The place is called Nallaṇṇampatti, about which tradition affords us the following story:

“Local children used to play their favourite games there’ when a new youth joined them in their games. But this new entrant always won and as a condition of his victory, he demanded that the defeated one receives a “hit” on his head with the knuckles of the victorious one. It so happened that one of the local boys invariably lost and was subjected thus to this punishment. This boy reported the matter to his father who decided to find out the truth and punish, if necessary, the “miscreant!” Thus, it so happened that when the father found out the new youth winning and punishing his son he caught hold of the new youth and gave him a beating with his whip. But, his youth went into the temple and disappeared there. It then became known that he was none other than Kañjamalai Siddhar himself! To this day one may notice the scars of such whipping on the icon of the Siddhar at the temple there. The place thus came to be recognized as Nallaṇṇampatti, (Nal = good, Aṇṇan = Brother, Patti = village) the village of the Good Brother”.

This vaḷalai or what is known in the common parlance as washing soda is duly processed along the prescribed lines and then taken into further preparations. Besides, the river running along this village is known to contain gold in its waters, as folklore and tradition claims that this-gold was alone used to cover the roof of the Golden Temple at Chidambaram, which is not far away from here. The hills surrounding this

²⁷⁹ The true importance of this place, Kañjamalai, lies in the fact that it carries its great value in the Tamil siddha alchemical studies and practice. It is here that most practitioners of the art and science of Tamil alchemy gather during the months of April-May to collect the vaḷalai, an ingredient indispensable for the preparation of the supreme recipe known to alchemists of this land as *mūppu*. See Karmega Kaviṅgar, *Koṅkumaṇḍala Satakam*, verse 35, (Tamil), in T.A. Muttusamy Konar, (ed.) *Op.cit.*, p. 39

²⁸⁰ *Pañcamugathil luthithidum agama paragamelaṅj Cheṇsol Tirumandi Tirumurai mūlar Tirumarabir Kañjamalai Siddhar vāḷvum irathan karaivaḷar Mañju tigaḷ Kañja māmalai yuṅ Koṅku maṇḍalamē.* see Karmega Kaviṅgar, *Koṅkumaṇḍala Satakam*, verse 35,(Tamil), T.A. Muttusamy Konar, (ed.) *Op.cit.*, p.38

village is also said to abound in what are known as *mahā-mūlikas* or plants and herbs of alchemical potencies and medicinal properties²⁸¹.

S.M.L. Lakshmanan Chettiar has recorded that the Siddhas who lived in Kañjamalai (Salem District) had special powers to convert base metals into gold. A village near the Salem steel plant site is even today called Ēlumātanūr or the village of seven parts; it is stated in the legend of the local temple that experts certified that the gold made by the Siddhas with their miraculous powers contained seven parts of gold, as against ten parts of gold recovered in gold mines²⁸².

Saṭṭaimuṇi

Saṭṭaimuṇi is also known as Kambaḷi Saṭṭaimuṇi and Kailāya Kambaḷi Saṭṭaimuṇi is a peculiar Siddha. The last among the above names indicate that he came from Kailāya, the Mount Kailāś. *Kambaḷi Saṭṭai* means woolen shirt. He should have worn woolen shirt, because of his association with the frost covered mountain. It is pertinent to state that the Sūfī mystics used to wrap their body with hides or woolen cloth. From his name it is inferred that he belonged to the group of Siddhas attached to the *Kailāya-varga*. There is also a Siddha with the name Saṭṭaimuṇi. It is not known whether he is the same as Kambaḷi Saṭṭaimuṇi²⁸³. Therefore nothing is clearly known of Saṭṭaimuṇi, except that he was a Śaiva ascetic, who lived at the same time with Agastya, and enjoyed some reputation as a ‘poet, philosopher and physician’. He wrote a work on theology, called *Jñāna Nūru* and another on medicine, called *Kalpa Nūru*. He is also believed to have been the author of the *Vāda Nigaṇḍu*, a treatise on alchemy which passes under his name²⁸⁴.

There prevails another tradition that he hailed from Śrī Lanka. He is frequently referred to in the *Kāyasiddha* works for his boldness in disclosing the guarded secrets of the Siddha cult and in connection with the fate of his *Dikṣāvidhi*-200 in the hands of Mūlar. It is probable that at first he belonged to neither of the *vargas* but later associated himself with the Kailāyavarga, won the admiration of its chief, and earned

²⁸¹ S.A.Sarma, *Op.cit.*, p.47

²⁸² S.M.L. Lakshmanan Chettiar, *Op.cit.*, Magic and Medicine, p. 63

²⁸³ S.N. Kandasamy, *Op.cit.*, pp.57-58

²⁸⁴ Simon Casie Chitty, *The Tamil Plutarch*, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1982 (rep.), p. 25

the title Kailāya Kambali Saṭṭaimuṇi. Sundarānandar, Rōmariṣi and Tēraiyaṛ were his disciples. The Bōgar-500 connects him with Sīrkālī near Chidambaram and Śrīraṅgam near Trichy, but neither oral tradition nor any other literary evidence supports this connection²⁸⁵.

Koṅkaṇa Siddhar

Koṅkaṇar was a celebrated Tamil Siddha, a philosopher and physician. As his name implies, he was a native of Koṅgunādu, the modern Coimbatore region. It is said that he became an ascetic in his very young age and lived along with the sages of the *Pothigai* Mountain, and learned all branches of knowledge from them. According to *Koṅkumaṇḍala satakam*, Koṅkaṇa Siddha lives at Ūthiyūr hills, which also, belong to the Koṅkumaṇḍalam. He is capable of transmuting the base metals into gold and also prepares gold using the metals like copper and herbal sauces and sulphur etc²⁸⁶.

The *Koṅkumaṇḍala satakam* refers the Koṅkaṇa Siddha as the prince of Magatha country. By the blessings of one Surānantha muṇi, the prince learned all kinds of arts. Then he went for pilgrimage. After visiting many important temples, finally he reached the Āthipuri. There he again met the Surānanthamuṇi and knew about his previous birth. Then he continued his pilgrimage and worshipped Koṅkanēśvara at the southern land. One day under a *Puṇṇai* tree, when he was worshipping the *Śivaliṅga*, Lord Śiva appeared before him as his guru and instructed him the *aṣṭasiddhis* and *Śivayōga*. Then after Koṅkaṇar started converted the copper into gold and gave it to the needy. He put a stroke into ashes by merely starring at it, when it shitted on him. He also developed his friendship with Gōrakṣanātha²⁸⁷.

²⁸⁵ R.Venkataraman, *Op.cit.*, p. 57

²⁸⁶ *Thōṛṛiya sembu Tarāvīyam pithalai sūlpacchilaich, cārṛuda ṇāka rasaṅkan thakamiṭṭut tandiramāi Thēṛṛundh tavampērṛa Koṅkaṇach cittarmun semponseithu, Mārṛurai kaṇḍathu Poṇṇūthi yūr Koṅku maṇḍalamē* see Karmega Kaviṅgar, *Koṅkumaṇḍala Satakam*, verse 37, (Tamil), in T.A. Muttusamy Konar, (ed.) *Op.cit.*, p. 40

²⁸⁷ *Pātha pattiram paṛpala mūli koṇ, Dūdhu narpuda muḻvali yeithiya Sūdha vēdhai sin thūrath tugaḷiṇāl, Vāda kuthi kaṇakam vaḷaṅkiṇāṇ.*

‘*Aiṅkaraṇai yethamaṇa*’ *meṇṇum Tiruppugaḷil, Koṅgiluyir peṛruvaḷar thenkaraiyil appar aruḷ konḍu, udalaṛṛa poruḷ aruḷ vāyē, kuṇṇjara mukarḱilaiya kanthaṇena verri peṛu Koṅkaṇagirikkulvaḷar perumālē.* See Karmega Kaviṅgar, *Koṅkumaṇḍala Satakam*, verse 37, (Tamil), in T.A. Muttusamy Konar, (ed.) *Op.cit.*, p. 40.

However, like Tirumūlar, he paid his homage to the Nandīsar and surrendered himself under his golden feet²⁸⁸.

According to another tradition, he belonged to Koṅgaṇadēśa, the low country of Western India between the Ghats and the Arabian Sea extending from Goa to Gujarat (Koṅkan Coast). It was one of the traditional fifty-six regions of India. In the *Saṅgam* poems, it is said that the inhabitants of Koṅgaṇa spoke Tuḷu language of the South Dravidian family. Koṅkaṇam is also identified with Koṅkāṇam, the hilly region in the northern portion of Tamiḷnāḍu, reigned by the chieftain Naṇṇaṇ during the *Saṅgam* period. If that is so, Koṅgaṇar the Siddha belonged to that part of Tamiḷnāḍu. Saint Aruṇagiri-nāthar refers Koṅgaṇagiri, the hill abode of Lord Muruga. Some scholars attributed Koṅgudēśa to be the native land of Koṅgaṇar. However, the correct location of the place name of Koṅgaṇar is not yet determined²⁸⁹.

The Ūthiyūr is located in the Coimbatore district of Tamiḷnāḍu. A shrine at Ūthiyūr is dedicated to Koṅkaṇa Siddha and the name of the Lord Śiva is known as Koṅgaṇēśa. Since this Siddha lived here under the auspices of this lord, he got the name 'Koṅkaṇar'. In the Rāsipuram region, there exists separate hill named after him, Koṅkaṇa Siddhar Malai, and also a separate shrine named Koṅkaṇa Siddha temple. Koṅgaṇar is said to have been a contemporary of the Tirumalisai Ālwār should have lived about the early part of the seventh century C.E. He was a great Śaiva and founded a shrine in honour of Śiva at Taṇjāvūr where it is believed, he attained the *Samādhi*. *Kataikkāṇḍam* and *Trikāṇḍam* are some of his important works²⁹⁰.

He wrote a treatise against polytheism, under the title of *Koṅgaṇar Jñānam*, and two treatises on medicine, one of which is entitled *Kadaikkāṇḍam*, and the other *Guṇavāḡadāṁ*. He also authored some works like *Pañcapatchi*, *Vāḡdam*, *Vaithiyar*, etc. He has also written a number of works on *śāktism*. Of them, the *Koṅgaṇar vadakāviyam-300* graphically describes the mode of drawing the *śricakra* and propitiating it. Koṅgaṇar says that he learnt alchemy from the Kailāyavarga. Saṭṭaimuṇi and Koṅgaṇar, who were great friends made many experiments in alchemy

²⁸⁸ *Koṅkaṇa Siddhar Pātakaḷ*, verse 7, p. 275

²⁸⁹ S.N.Kandaswamy, *Op.cit.*, p. 57

²⁹⁰ V. Ramachandra Dikshitar, *Op.cit.*, pp. 162-167; see also R. Venkataraman, *Op.cit.*, p.55

and the latter was admired by the former too. In the Siddha tradition Koṅgaṇar is much reputed as an alchemist for a *rasaguḷikai* (a mercurial pill) holding which in his mouth he is said to have “travelled not only in the regions of the sun, the moon and the stars, but also where the Supreme Mother Goddess dwells’ this celestial excursion of Koṅgaṇar is frequently referred to in many *Kāyasiddha* works²⁹¹. He is also the author of 111 stanzas called *Vālaikkummi*. The word *Vālai* denotes a young girl, who is worshipped as a form of *Śakti*, the Goddess and the term *Kummi* means a female dance with clapping hands and singing songs rhythmically.

*Oh! Young maid! The roaming bull should be tethered;
desired should be cut; the vital breath should be contained;
The branch beyond reach should be bent; we know not how
long this body will last!*²⁹²

This has a mystic meaning in which the roaming bull may refer to the mind and eluding branch of truth. Besides, like Tirumūlar, Koṅgaṇar also says about the existence of one god and one *Vēda*, *guru* etc. The following is a stanza taken from the *Koṅgaṇar Jñānam*:

*There is but one God, there is but one Vēda, there is but one way of initiation
by the good spiritual guide, there is but one kind of bliss which he grants, and
there is but one genus amongst mankind upon the earth. They who hold the
country by asserting that there are four Vēdas, and six sects, and many gods,
will surely enter the fiery hell*²⁹³.

He also sung that the one-tusked child Viṇāyaka is Gaṇapati or Gaṇēśa with the elephant head, the youthful god who is remover of all obstacles²⁹⁴. He also sung that *Vālai* is the *Śakti* Pārvati, the consort of Śiva, and *pattini*, the perfect female and perfect wife as well as Sarasvati, the goddess of wisdom and knowledge. He also described that the *Vālai* is worshipped by all the Siddhas²⁹⁵.

²⁹¹ See R. Venkataraman, *Op.cit.*, p.54.

²⁹² *Koṅkana Siddhar Pātalkaḷ*, verse 43, p. 280; Simon Casie Chitty, *Op.cit.*, pp. 50-51

²⁹³ Simon Casie Chitty, *Op.cit.*, pp. 50-51

²⁹⁴ *Koṅkana Siddhar Pātalkaḷ*, verse. 2, p. 274,

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, verse. 3, p. 274, see Kamil V. Zvelebil, (2003), pp. 167-169.

Later Siddhas

Akappēy, Aḷukani, Itaikkādar, Kaduveli, Enāti, Kālai, Kudampai and Pāmbāṭṭi are considered as the latter Siddhars in the traditional classification. They differed in no way from the earlier ones, except that their poetry was much inferior in quality but easier to understand than that of the earlier Siddhars. Undoubtedly, these later Siddhars sang their songs for the masses using the common speech and adopting a simple style.

Agappēy Siddhar

Agappēy Siddhar is one of the later Siddha, who probably belongs to the 15th century C.E. He has authored 90 songs, which are composed in simple language and form, but deeply mystical. The Siddha under reference personified the inner resident (*agam*), which may be mind or consciousness, as a female devil and addressed it in all his poems, communicating his rare experiences and mystic insights. Since the mind is restless and rambling beyond the control of one's self, it is metaphorically called a devil, the terrific wanderer. The refrain, *agappēy* occurs at least twice in almost all his poems and hence the Siddha is named after this rare usage. Some of the Tamil Siddhas are known by the tag-lines found in their songs. He addressed his songs to the “demon of the soul”. He offer an expose of Siddha doctrines and instructions, from a vision of the evolution of the universe and man to a total mystical ‘nihilism’ in the acceptance of pure Void. Often his stanzas are coached in twilight language. For instance, he used the term ‘*intu*’ to denote the moon, which also refers here the male semen and ‘*iravi*’, the Sun that denotes the menstrual blood²⁹⁶. His nihilist view of world and salvation is in some ways reminiscent of the more polished thought of that earlier south Indian mystic, Nāgārjuna²⁹⁷.

I do not exist
The Lord does not exist
The self does not exist
*The Teacher does not exist*²⁹⁸

Mantras do not exist
Experience does not exist

²⁹⁶ Agappēy Siddhar Songs, Verse. 47

²⁹⁷ Kamil V. Zvelabil, (2003), p. 163; see also S.N. Kandaswamy, *Op.cit.*, p.53

²⁹⁸ Agappēy Siddhar Songs, Verse. 70, p. 209; quoted from Kamil V. Zvelabil, *The Poets*, p.109

*Tantras do not exist
Doctrines have been destroyed*²⁹⁹

*Rites are just Devi's play
Knowledge – a hollow stable
The Lord is but an illusion
Everything is like that*³⁰⁰

*Why and what for to study?
Why and what for to act?
All set rules and all forms
have been burnt and annulled*³⁰¹

*All manifested actions
You see are only Void
Those which in fact do not appear
Will appear in Pure Nothingness.*³⁰²

Aḷug(k)aṇi Siddhar

Aḷugaṇi Siddha is also one of the later Siddhas, but nothing is known about him. From the spelling found in the Tamil version, it may right to say that he composed his songs beautifully and hence, he name as Aḷugaṇi. (*Aḷagu* = beauty + *Aṇi* = rhetoric skill). But some of the scholars interpreted his name as Aḷukaṇṇi, the words denotes a person with weeping eyes. Though the word is not used either as a refrain or a rare occurrence, the Siddha is named Aḷukaṇṇi, since his verses heave the sigh of depression. It does not mean that he suffered from despondency and despair. His expressions are saturated with mournful emotions. In some editions instead of *Aḷukaṇṇi*, the corrupt form of the word *Aḷukuṇi* is also found³⁰³.

Pāmbāṭṭi Siddhar

One of the most famous among the later Tamil Siddhas is Siddha Pāmbāṭṭi. He is believed to have lived between 15th and 17th centuries. Based on the chronological assessment of the poet's lexical use he was dated between 14th and 15th century³⁰⁴.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, Verse. 71, p. 210; *Ibid.*, p.109

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, Verse. 72, p. 210; *Ibid.*, p.109

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, Verse. 77, p. 209; *Ibid.*, p.110

³⁰² *Ibid.*, Verse. 88, p. 212; *Ibid.*, p. 110; see also Peter Heehs (ed.), *Op.cit.*, p. 288; S.N. Kandaswamy, *Op.cit.*, p.60

³⁰³ S.N. Kandaswamy, *Op.cit.*, p.60; see also Kamil V. Zvelabil, (2003), p. 166

³⁰⁴ Pāmbāṭṭi Siddhar speaks of a musket, which was first used in India in 1368 by Bukka I of Vijayanagara Empire and the musket salute received by Vasco Da Gama in 1498, means the Siddha was lived much earlier than the 17th century. See David C. Buck, *Dance! Snake! Dance!, A Translation with Comments of the Song of Pampatti-Cittar*, A Writers Workshop Publication, Calcutta, 1976, p. xiii

According to the Bōgar-7000³⁰⁵ “Pāmbāṭṭi Siddhar had been a snake charmer before he was initiated into the mysteries of *Siddhism* of Saṭṭaimuṇi, ‘When the former was engaged in catching a rare snake, called *Navaratṇappāmbu*’. If Pāmbāṭṭi Siddhar was a contemporary of Saṭṭaimuṇi, the former would belong to the 17th century³⁰⁶. A cave in Marudamalai has now become more associated with Pāmbāṭṭi Siddhar³⁰⁷.

Pāmbu literally means a serpent and *Pāmbāṭṭi* means the snake-charmer who makes the snakes to dance. In the poems of the Siddha, the coiled power (*kuṇḍalini-śakti*) is often personified as a serpent. In all his 129 poems, the Siddha exhorts the serpent to dance, realizing the greatness of the Supreme Lord Śiva. The refrain remains in all poems *ādu pambē!* (Dance! Snake! Dance!), in the vocative case. All these songs are modeled on the songs of the professional snake charmer. The name Pāmbāṭṭi ‘is an epithet given him by his admirers, probably because of his poetically and psychologically ingenious use of snake dance imagery³⁰⁸. Hence, the Siddha was named as Pāmbāṭṭi Siddhar, who has perfected *kuṇḍalini yōga* and attained immortality³⁰⁹.

His songs are sung by the popular masses of Tamilnādu even today, because of his ‘*Cintu*’ type of versification composed in folk-song meter and mostly in twilight language. He is perhaps the most outspoken of all the Siddhas, ridiculing idol worship, the *Vēdas*, the *Āgamas* and other scriptures and denouncing caste. He is egoistic and boasts of the immense power of the Siddhas³¹⁰. The structure of the stanzas of Siddha Pāmbāṭṭi is composed in two styles. Of the 129 verses, the first 111 verses are composed in 4 lines and rests of 18 songs are in 8 lines³¹¹. Many people sing his songs as the folk poems of snake-charmers, which gives an unusual insight into the psyche of ordinary people. These poems stand as a testimony to the

³⁰⁵ Bōgar-7000: IV, 576-581

³⁰⁶ R. Venkataraman, *Op.cit.*

³⁰⁷ Marudamalai is a hill located around twelve kilometers to the west of Coimbatore. It has a small shrine dedicated to Lord Muruga, a Tamil deity, atop this hill. A natural cave near to this temple is considered as the *Samādhi* of the Pāmbāṭṭi Siddha since 1935, which is still under worship and attaining more popularity among the devotees. *Census of India, 1961*, vol. IX, part XI, iii, Government of Tamilnadu, Madras, p. 208

³⁰⁸ David C. Buck, *Op.cit.*, p. x

³⁰⁹ S.N. Kandasamy, *Op.cit.*, p.59; see also Peter Heehs, *Op.cit.*, p. 289; T. N. Gaṇapathy, *Bōgar*, p. 29

³¹⁰ K. Meenakshi, *Op.cit.*, p.118; see also A.V. Subramania Aiyar, *Op.cit.*, p. 64

³¹¹ See Kōvēndhan, *Pāmbāṭṭi Siddhar songs*, Verses. 130, pp.245-265

egalitarian culture against the looming threat of *Vēdic*-brahmanism. One of the Pāmbāṭṭi's verses ends on a note where he talks of 'setting fire to divisions of caste' and 'taking philosophical questions to the market place' this leaves no doubt about the real intentions of the Siddhas³¹². Thus no wonder to say that Zvelebil rightly called him as 'the poet of the Powers'.

Through his poems he raises the *kuṇḍalini* force that lies below like a snake. He eulogizes his tribe and boasts of their supernatural powers. He puffs up his chest and says: "We can control all the five elements; destroy this great universe and create a new one"³¹³. In fact he is the only Siddhar who boasts of the eight kinds of occult or supernatural powers. He denounces caste differences and bawls: "We will set fire to the disgusting caste system"³¹⁴. One's caste, culture, physical appearance, birth possessions and occupation do not matter. He who has dedicated his all at the feet of the Lord and who constantly remembers the Lord succeeds in attaining God consciousness, no matter whether he is a high-born or a low-born. He rails at the four *Vēdas*, the various kinds of *purāṇas*, *śāstras* and *tantras* by calling them rubbish³¹⁵, and sings of Lord Śiva as the Supreme Power of the Universe. Above all he intimidates all men not to lust for women and also condemns the physical charms of women³¹⁶.

Siddha Iḍaikkādar

Iḍaikkādar literally means 'the Siddha of the pasture forest'. Except his name, nothing is known about his personal biography. There are some speculations regarding his native place. The *Abhidānacintāmaṇi* (20th century) records two traditions: (i) that Iḍaikkādar hailed from Iḍayanttiṭṭu in Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam and that once when he was grazing his flock on the Podiyil hills, he was initiated into *Siddhism* by a Navasiddha, and (ii) that he was born at Iḍaikkādu, near Madurai. According to another tradition Iḍaikkādar was born in Iḍaikkādu and died in Tiru-Iḍaikkādu, both in the

³¹² Braj Ranjan Mani, *Op.cit.*, p. 161.

³¹³ *Pāmbāṭṭi Siddhar songs*, Verses. 31-32, pp.249

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 123, p.264

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Verses. 98, p.259

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Verses. 50-59, pp.252-253

Kaṇṇiyākumari District. *Koṅgumaṇḍala śatakam* says³¹⁷ Iḍaikkāḍar hailed from Koṇṇavanūr in the Koṅgu country. Rāmadēvar, a *Kāyasiddha* of 17th century says that Iḍaikkāḍar is from Cochin (Kēraḷā). He came to Kaḷakkāḍ (Tirunelveli District) to meet Sundarānandar and remained there for a long time. In that case Iḍaikkāḍar belongs to 17th century. Further, The *Abhidānacintāmaṇi* also records a legend about Iḍaikkāḍar, that due to his prescience that there was going to be a drought for twelve years. Therefore he trained his flock to live by poisonous herbs capable of growing in dry area. During the height of the drought, the surprised *navagrahas* visited Iḍaikkāḍar in order to know the secret of existence of the Siddha and his flock, while all others were dead. Thus Siddha greeted them with the goat's milk which due to the effect of the poisonous herbs, made the *navagrahas* fall asleep. The Siddha quickly arranged their positions in such a way that it rained sufficiently to make the earth prosperous³¹⁸.

Simon Casie Chitty recorded that Iḍaikkāḍar, so named after Iḍaikaḷi-nāḍu, the land of his nativity, was a poet from his earliest youth. Having heard that Kulesa Pāṇḍyan, who then reigned at Madurai, added to the title of a king the still more enduring distinction of a poet, and had a seat on the College bench, Iḍaikkāḍar sought to secure his patronage by composing a panegyric on him, and reciting it in his presence; but the king took no notice of it. Stung to the quick at the neglect, he retired to a temple at Vada Madurai, wither Kapilar, and the rest of the professors of the College, who did not approve of the king's conduct, followed him. The king on receiving this intelligence went to Vada Madurai and by much entreaty prevailed on him, and the professors to return to the College and having heard his poem again recited, honoured him by the gift of an elephant, and a horse, and by the donation of lands and gold. Satisfied with this he took leave of the king, and returned to his country. He is believed to be a contemporary of Tiruvaḷḷuvar. It is said that Iḍaikkāḍar authored a grammatical treatise entitled 'Īsimuri', which is quoted by one Guṇasēkerar, the Commentator of the *Karigai*³¹⁹.

This Siddha also seems to get his name from the place where he lived. U.V. Swaminatha Aiyar located Iḍai-Kāḍu, a place near Orattanāḍu in Tañjāvūr District. In

³¹⁷ *Koṅgumaṇḍala Śatakam*: 38.

³¹⁸ R. Venkataraman, *Op.cit.*, pp. 70-71.

³¹⁹ Simon Casie Chitty, *Op.cit.*, pp. 30-31

Tamiḻ the term *kādu* means the pastoral region (*mullai-nilam*). It is the wooded land between the high lands and the low lands. He also lived on the Aruṇachala Mountain at Tiruvaṇṇāmalai. *Iḍai* (*iḍai jāti*) denotes shepherd caste, associated with the region. His native name is unknown. True to his name, he composed verses of folk metre, addressing the shepherds Tāṇḍava Kōn and Nārāyaṇa Kōn in a dialogue expressing rare thoughts³²⁰. Idaikkādar seems to be a disciple of Koṇgaṇar or perhaps Bōgar. The story goes that he was a cowherd by caste. Once one of the Navasiddhas passed by and wanted some milk to quench his thirst. When it was readily offered the Siddhar initiated him. From that time Idaikkādar became a *Jñāni*. Besides this, there are several floating traditions connected to him³²¹.

He authored 130 songs which are highly realistic in tone, set in the form of a dialogue between two shepherds, Tāṇṭavakkōṇār and Nārāyaṇakkōṇār. Both of them stress the need for man to understand himself fully and ridicule those whose ignore the Light within and wander with an oil lamp in hand only to fall into the deep sea of ignorance. In a powerful yet simple language Idaikkādar expresses his mystic ideas: “Whatever your eyes see are mere dreams. Be sure that the world will perish and your body doubtless will decay. What is everlasting is only the Divine”. His poems suggest that the seeker of the Divine must leave behind the over trodden tracks of ignorance and falsehood and walk on the path of Truth and Light. The Divine is present within him, around him and above him.

In his songs, some verses are addressed to the cow (*paśu*), the domestic animal of the pastoral region. For example, he sung towards the cow saying that ‘O Gentle cow! Even if I had everything- if I had not the Lord’s Grace, you can think of me as one who has nothing’³²². Then again in another song he says ‘O gentle cow! Apart from God’s help there’s nothing to be sought. The holy feet of the father are the very breath of life’³²³. Besides cow, this Siddha also speaks to the dragon fly, birds, peacock, to the flute³²⁴, etc.

³²⁰ S.N. Kandaswamy, *Op.cit.*, p.56

³²¹ V. Ramachandra Dikshitar, *Op.cit.*, pp. 162-167

³²² *Idaikkāṭṭu Siddhar Pātalaḷ*, verse 37, p. 228; in Kamil V. Zvelebil, (2003), p. 161

³²³ *Ibid.*, verse 38, p.228 ; in Kamil V. Zvelebil, (2003), p. 161

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, verses 71-100 respectively, pp. 231-234

In Śaiva Siddhānta, the word *paśu* connotes soul, and hence the address in the Siddha poems to a cow may be taken to have been directed to the soul. There are some verses addressed to the shepherd to blow the *kuḷal*, (flute) which is peculiar to the pastoral land. Each line of some verses ends with the refrain, *pāl kara*³²⁵, to milk (a cow or other domestic animal). Again, the Siddha exhibits his allegiance to the pastoral region when he addresses the shepherd in many poems to tie the cattle (a symbol of controlling *karma*, *indriya*, *pāśa*, *mala* and *ahaṅkāra*) in the shed. In some verses, the beetles peculiar to the rural region are commanded to flutter and fly, singing the spiritual victory. Some poems are addressed straightly to the people in general and some others to the mind and ignorance. There are some verses addressed to the birds like cuckoo, peacock and *hamsa* (a swan like bird). These songs are often filled with theistic devotion. A close study of the verses reveals the fact that the anonymous Siddha should have belonged to the shepherd caste and hailed from the pastoral region and hence, he held the name Iḍai Kādar, concealing his original name.

Siddha Kudambai

Kudambai means the earring. In its extension of meaning the word denotes a lady. In all her poems, the Siddha addresses the soul as *kudambai*. The vocative form of this word is *kudambāi* which occurs at the end of the second line of every verse. Hence, the Siddha came to be known as Kudambai Cittar³²⁶. Kudambai addresses all his 32 songs in a symbolic language to a woman wearing *kudambai*. In the presence of the Supreme Being all are one. Everyone lives for himself and it is only He who lives for others. Conscience is our guide; wisdom is the best teacher; World is the university and the best friend is God Himself. He pleads that for the one who had realized himself, all other things in this world are trivial and insignificant. He questions: “Why does one need an external appearance when one had conquered the Lord of Death?”³²⁷.

Often Kudambai Siddha expressed his mystic ideas through symbolic terms. He asks that “To those who drink mango juice and live on the mountain, what use is

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, verses 101-106, p. 235

³²⁶ S.N. Kandaswamy, *Op.cit.* p. 58

³²⁷ *Kudambai Siddhar Pātalkaḷ*, verse. 26, p. 271

coconut juice? O Lady with the ear-stud! What use is the coconut juice?”³²⁸. Unless the reader knows that 'mango juice' and 'coconut juice' stand for *kuṇḍalini* force and toddy respectively, the entire verse will become enigmatic. The song actually means: "Those who awaken *kuṇḍalini*, the *yōga-śakti* lying coiled or asleep in the inner body, and make it meet the Divine Consciousness, enjoy a bliss which is beyond the grip of words. The supposed joy given by the intoxicating drink like toddy fades into insignificance when compared to the bliss. And only the Siddhars who are always on a high know this". Most of his songs are written in simple form and languages are really with metaphors and symbols. He occasionally uses typical Siddha symbolism of various spices, herbs, plants and remedies³²⁹. All of his songs are rhetorical questions³³⁰.

The Siddhar, in about thirty verses of three lines each, brilliantly expressed his ideas. The poetical compositions of Kudambai Siddhar are direct, chaste and simple, which reach even the common people easily and create some awareness among them. Like other Tamil Siddhas, Kudambai Siddhar also uses the words like *veṭṭa veli*, *veli oli*, and *śūnyam* as referring to reality. His songs distinguish true spiritual life without any caste-marks. In the words of Kudambai Siddhar, true spirituality consists in spiritual rebirth. This interior transformation once attained, there is then no longer any need for the regenerative *kalpa* medicaments, nor for the physical regeneration. The Siddha undoubtedly speaks from the pinnacle of his realisation and the disciple-daughter evidently belongs to the “best qualified” to receive this wisdom teaching³³¹.

Kaduveli Siddhar

Recently a place called Irumbai is largely associated with Siddha Kaduveli and bears some interesting legends. Besides, in Irumbai temple there is a bronze image of a Kaduveli Siddhar seated on tiger skin, found in the *Arthamaṇḍapa* (next to the Amman Shrine) of the Mākālēsvara temple. According to the legend, under the reign of the Cōlā King Kulottuṅga III, Irumbai region was ruled by a petty king

³²⁸ *Ibid.*, verse. 28, p. 271

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, verse. 27, p. 271

³³⁰ Kamil V. Zvelebil, (2003), p. 164; Zvelebil also translated the songs of Kudambai Siddha and some of them are found in his another work ‘*The Poets of the Powers*’, pp. 111-112.

³³¹ S.A. Sarma, *Op.cit.*, pp. 57-59

Guṇasīlan who had Kōṭṭakarai (now Auroville) as his capital. For many years the Kōṭṭakarai region remained under great famine due to continuous drought without rain. The Lord Irumbai Mākālēśvara appeared in King's dream and informed him to disturb the penance of the Siddha, who sat near the temple pond, and then the situation will be changed. Thus, King asked Sundaravaḷḷi, a temple *dāsi*, to smoothly disturb the penance of the Siddha and she did the same successfully. Besides this, there are also few other legends popular in this region about the Kaduveli Siddhar.

Kaduveli Siddhar is often referred in some of the lists of eighteen Siddhas and in some of the scholarly works he was accommodated in the lists of latter Siddhas. He authored 34 stanzas in a folk song meter, stressing various features of worldly life. He believed to have lived in 16th and 17th centuries C.E. Except his tentative dates, nothing is known about him. Even his name is a mystery and seems to be derived from a special refrain associated with his poems such as '*kaduveli*'³³² means 'expansive space'. Like the earlier Siddhas, he also a believer of *yōga* and protest against the then existing religious practices and social life³³³. His original name, nativity and period are still more obscure. Kaduveli Siddhar probably used the term *veṭṭaveli* as a symbol of the ultimate³³⁴. He used the term *Veṭṭaveli* in two songs which means 'empty space'³³⁵. Since he considers the physical body as perishable and the world as unreal, R. Venkataraman classified Kaduveli Siddha in the group of the *Ñānasiddhas*. He was primarily a Śaivite³³⁶ yearning for a mystical union with God achieved through deep devotion and *laya yōga*³³⁷. To him, Śiva is the only God and his songs generally show a strong desire for a mystic merger in Śiva³³⁸. Most of his poems are largely concerned with advice on moral subjects. He stresses that don't give curse, don't lie, don't gamble or cheat which destroys your surroundings as a whole. So follow the path of *bhakti* which gives a man some benefits and it is only

³³² K. Meenakshi, 'The Siddhas of Tamil Nadu: A Voice of Dissent', in R. Champakalaksmi and S. Gopal (eds), *Tradition, Dissent and Ideology: Essays in Honour of Romila Thapar*, OUP, Delhi, 1996, pp.117-119

³³³ *Ibid.*

³³⁴ R. Venkataraman, *Op.cit.*, pp. 68-69

³³⁵ *Kaduveli Siddhar Pāṭal*: Verse. 10 and 22, in Kōvēndhan, *Op.cit.*, pp. 238-243.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*, Verse.26

³³⁷ R. Venkataraman, *Op.cit.*, pp. 7-8

³³⁸ *Kaduveli Siddhar Pāṭal*: 6 (as *Paraman*); in song 26 as Śiva and song 34 as *Īsan*; R. Venkataraman, *Op.cit.*, p. 98

best way to attain salvation³³⁹. He denounces drinking liquor and consuming opium³⁴⁰. He mostly stress on devotion, discipline, meditation, *aṣṭāṅga-yōga*³⁴¹. Some of them are most famous among the rural mass and even in most of street plays during festivals, few of his songs were sung. One of the famous songs is “*Nanda vaṇathilōr āṇḍi....*”, which means,

*“In a park there was a seer. For all of ten months, he pestered a potter; and then came away with a little water-pot. He danced and he danced, then threw it down and smashed it”*³⁴².

Thus, Kaduveli Siddhar evidently is a moralist. His composition consists of aphoristic moral commands of do’s and don’ts, aimed to admonish the listener never to stray from the straight path of devotion to the God. His songs show his masterly illustration of the use of literary skill and creative imagination³⁴³.

Madurai Vālai Sāmi

Vālai Sāmi, another Siddha, has envisaged that the Siddha is one who dwells in the city of unique and great space (*peru-veli*). In the language of the Siddhas, the epithets *peru-veli*, *veṭṭa-veli* and *pāl veli* indicated the colorless and adjunctless Ultimate Reality³⁴⁴. He seems to be a devotee of *Śakti* as a virgin. From the very name, it is presumed that he lived in Madurai, where Lord Sokkanātha as a Siddha performed many sports and miracles.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*, Verses 1, 2, 18 and 30

³⁴⁰ *Kaduveli Siddhar Pāṭal*: 29; through this song, Siddha advices the general public (and not in particular to any Siddha), as don’t consume opium, don’t drink toddy, don’t die by fear and don’t read the books written by the person without *bhakti*. In any of this place, he never refers the drinking and opium consuming habits of Siddhas. However R. Venkatraman (*Op.cit*, p. 98) and K. Meenakshi (*Op.cit*, p. 119), mentions that Siddha Kaduveli vehemently criticized the habit of drinking and consuming opium in his songs.

³⁴¹ *Kaduveli Siddhar Pāṭal*: 31

³⁴² *Kaduveli Siddhar Pāṭal*: 4. Even today this song is modified and come in many Tamil Cinemas and naughty youths modify this song by replacing different words with the same music. Songs of Kaduveli Siddha stanza 4; See also David C. Buck, *Op.cit.*, pp. 78-79

³⁴³ S.A.Sarma, *Op.cit.*, p.63

³⁴⁴ S.N. Kandaswamy, *Op.cit.*, p.53

Puṇṇākkīsar

Some Siddhas preferred to assume funny and fantastic names of loathsome nature, perhaps to attract the attention of the readers. One of them is popular with the name *puṇṇākkū-īsar*. The word *puṇṇākkū* is the corrupt form of *piṇṇākkū* which means oil-cake, being the product of the residue of oilseeds after crushing in the oil press (*Sekku*). In the ordinary usage of the people, the word is used contemptuously to denote good for nothing fellow. However, the particular Siddha who delighted in calling himself as an oil-cake came to be known Puṇṇākkīsar. The word *īsar* denotes Śiva or God. It amuses everybody to call the Siddha the Lord of oil-cake!³⁴⁵

Kāgapusuṇḍar

According to the legend, he was the father of the Siddha Rōmariṣi. Once he met the ascetic Vaśiṣṭa and told him that he met in his lifetime eight Vaśiṣṭas like him. *Kāgam* means crow. The etymology of the word *pusuṇḍar* is not found. If it is derived from *puṣam* meaning dried cowdung, i.e., excrement, then it may be presumed that the Siddha was fond of calling himself a crow's excrement despicable by the ordinary people. From such names, the Siddhas revealed that they treated both the beautiful and the ugly alike, since they developed a sense of equanimity and neutrality towards all things which were normally classified into the pleasant and the painful. One scholar adduced a fantastic interpretation for the name Kāgapusuṇḍar. According to him, the Siddha under reference transfigured himself into a crow and roved everywhere. This kind of definition is used perhaps due to folk-etymology³⁴⁶.

Pūṇai Kaṇṇar

This pseudo-name denotes the Siddha with eyes resembling those of a cat. Some people have cat-like eyes and hence they are called Pūṇai Kaṇṇar even in the current usage. One of the nine gems (*nava-maṇi*) *vaidūrya* gets the name “cat's eye” as per the Tamil Lexicon. But, in the early Tamil epic *Silappatikāram* and its classical commentaries, *pūṇai-kaṇ* denotes *puṣparāga* (topaz). Though the Siddha may be

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p.61

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*,

considered as a cat-eyed man, he should have been an invaluable gem among the *yōgins* and *Jñānis*³⁴⁷.

Gaṇapati Dāsar

He is the author of *Neñcaṛi-viḷakkam* of one hundred verses composed in *virutta* metre. At the end of each poem he addressed his mind to pay homage to the Lord of Nāgai, the contracted form of Nāgaṭṭiṇam. He was an avowed *Vēdāntin*. In the epilogue of the text, there are three poems mentioning his name Gaṇapati Dāsar. Again one may think that this name also was not the original one, since it means the servant of Lord Gaṇapati, the symbolic representation of *Praṇava*, the primal sound *Aumkāra*, the root or *mūla-mantra*. The Siddha invokes Lord Gaṇēśa in the prologue poem and calls Him Mūla-Guruparaṇ with elephant face, to bless him who offers flowers at the feet of great souls who rooted out desire from their heart³⁴⁸.

Sūryāṇandar

The text *Sūryāṇandar Sūttiram* consists of thirteen long verses of *virutta* metre. In the opening verse, he venerated Lord Dakṣiṇamūrti, God as preceptor or divine *guru*. He mentioned that the mystic knowledge of the Siddha system was originally communicated by Śiva who in turn revealed the same to Sūryāṇandar. The real name of the Siddha is not known. In the 12th verse, there is a line, *Sūryāṇandaṇ ivai sollum nūlē* suggesting the author's name. It may be an acquired one or real name, but so far unable to be settled definitely³⁴⁹.

Pūraṇāṇandar

He is the author of Śivayōga-Sāram. In the opening verse, the Siddha explains the reason for getting the epithet Pūraṇāṇandaṇ to be his name. His preceptor Nāraṇa Dēsigar, who mastered all the scriptures and eradicated the ignorance and delusion of his disciples, was the very embodiment of *jñāna*, delivering the mystic message to the Siddha and christened him with the name Pūraṇāṇandaṇ. Hence, it is clear that the

³⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p.61

³⁴⁸ *Ibid*, p.62

³⁴⁹ *Ibid*.,

name was not the original, given by his parents but bestowed on him by his preceptor at the time of initiation³⁵⁰.

Yākkōbu Siddhar

His original name was Rāmadēvar. In his text, *Yākkōbu Vaidya Cintāmaṇi*, verse seven, he has made a reference to his visit to Mecca by teleportation and had dialogues with the Islamic *jñānis*. Though he was victorious in the debates and discussions with them, he became a convert giving due regard to their respect and affection and was given the name Jacob. The Tamilised form of Arab word Jacob was Yākkōbu which he held for the rest of his life. In the beginning poem of *Yākkōbu Vaidya Cintāmaṇi*, he made obeisance to the Nabimār, the messengers of Allah. In the subsequent verses, he exhibited equal attachment and devotion to the gods of Hindu Pantheon. Then he proceeded to discuss in detail the different kinds of native medicine along with their ingredients and their effect in curing many an ailment³⁵¹.

Kārai Siddhar

Like many other Siddhas of contemporary period, the original name of this Kārai Siddhar (1918) is also not known. But, R.Venkataraman in his work mentioned that he was the son of Kṛīṣṇamāchārya, a Vaiṣṇava Brahmin of Trivandrum (Tiruvāṇandapuram of Kēraḷā) and a profound scholar in Sanskrit. The ‘Siddha’ was initiated into *yōga* by a *Guru* at Lakśman Jhula in the Himalayas. After wandering in many places he returned finally to his home at Tiruvandrum. Then he engaged in married life and had two children. His only work, the *Kaṇagavaippu* is very much influenced by the Siddha lore such as alchemy, medicine, magic and *Yōga*³⁵².

Tattuvarāyar

Tattuvarāyar of the 17th century also included in one of the lists of Tamil Siddhas. He also wrote against idolatory, but his knowledge and relation between the schools of medicine (*Siddha-Vaidyam*) is not clear³⁵³. Tattuvarāyar was the disciple of

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*,

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*,

³⁵² R.Venkataraman, *Op.cit.*, p.171

³⁵³ K.A.N. Sastry, *Op.cit.*, pp. 95-96.

one Svarūpānanda Deśīkar, and both the ascetics lived during the 14th and 15th centuries, who were also the authors of many devotional poems and songs remarkable for the simplicity of their diction and their wide appeal to the common man; the songs were of the nature of ditties which created many new models for subsequent composers. Both compiled an anthology in Tamil on philosophy of *Advaita* which together conserve much of Tamil Śaivism³⁵⁴.

Kuṇḍalini Māmuṇivar

Kuṇḍalini Māmuṇi is believed to be a great Siddha. The locals accept that he is a Siddha who spent most of his life in the Tiruvakkarai temple and sang in its praise³⁵⁵. He breathed his last in that temple and a *Samādhi* was built over his mortal remains within the temple premises. The *Sthalapurāṇa* states that Vakkarāsūra, a demon who belongs to the tradition of Kuṇḍalini Muṇivar ruled this place³⁵⁶. The original name of this Siddha or the period of his existence is unknown³⁵⁷. However, the term ‘*Kuṇḍalini*’ represents one of the popular *yōgic* practices which have been often practiced by the Siddhas. By practicing the *Kuṇḍalini yōga*, this Siddha might have got this name.

Tāyumānavar (1705-1742 C.E.)

Tāyumānavar is a great Śaiva saint and a living force in South Indian religious life. He was named after Tāyumānavar, the Lord enshrined in the temple at Trichy. A Vellāla by birth, he was at first attached to the temple of Vēdāranyam (Tañjāvūr District). Being the son of Kāḍiliyappa Piḷḷai of Vēdāranyam, a minister under Vijayaraṅga Sokkanātha Nāyaka of Madurai³⁵⁸, Tāyumānavar succeeded to this father’s office. When the ruler died, the widowed queen tempted him with the offer of her hand and kingdom. This was the turning point. After giving her much good advice,

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 134.

³⁵⁵ However, none of his songs are available or popularly spread over in this area.

³⁵⁶ Different types of legends are there regarding this Siddha. Traditions say that, he was the grandfather of the Vakkarasūran. See C.S.Murugesan, *Pugazh Mikka Kāli Tirukkōilgaḷ* (Tamil), Sankar Pathipagam, Chennai, 2010, p.89

³⁵⁷ In fact the original names of many popular siddhas are still not known to anybody. Most of these Siddhas were given with Pseudo names by the respective scholars who worked on those Siddha literatures. For instance, the name of the Siddhars like Pāmbāṭṭi, Agapēy, Kudambai are not their original names. These are names given to them by the refrains which they often use in their songs.

³⁵⁸ This Nāyak ruler had Trichy as his headquarters; see R.Venkataraman, *Op.cit.*, p. 168

Tāyumāṇavar left her service to become a seeker of God and Truth. Meanwhile, his brother arranged his marriage, thus Tāyumāṇavar agreed and got married. A son was born to him, but his wife died. The boy was named Kaṇakasabhāpati and grew to be a learned man. However, after the death of his wife, Tāyumāṇavar became an ascetic and was initiated to mysticism by one Mouṇaguru of the line of Tirumūlar³⁵⁹. His hymns constitute a simple and moving record of his experiences and are still popular, being often sung in musical concerts. He tries to reconcile Advaita and Śaiva Siddhānta by playing down their differences often over-emphasized by controversialists³⁶⁰.

He became a profound student of Śaiva literature. He happened to see Mouṇagurusāmi and expressed his desire to be initiated into the mystery of *ātmañāna*. The Sāmi was pleased and promised to give him the initiation in their next meeting. Accordingly, Mouṇagurusāmi permitted him to become a *sanyāsin* and instructed him the *Śivayōga*. From that day he became a wandering ascetic, visited a number of sacred places of pilgrimage and at least got his *samādhi* in Lakśmipuram near Rāmnād³⁶¹. Like other mystics, he longs for direct communion with the Lord. According to him God is *Sat-Cit-Ānanda*- the everlasting bliss³⁶².

The description of the Siddhas in the poems of Tāyumāṇavar

Tāyumāṇavar says that the Siddhas possess an eternal body which is spiritualized by dematerialization;³⁶³ they have reconciled the *Vēdānta* and the *Siddhānta*,³⁶⁴ and can turn even potsherds into gold, make the poor very rich, move to the ends of the world in no time, become equal to gods and, in short, ‘can bring heaven on earth’. He ecstatically declares to have made his brazen body a golden one with the grace of God. Tāyumāṇavar recalls the glory of the Tamil Siddha Brotherhood in his “invocatory-verses” and sings; “O Immanent-transcendent

³⁵⁹ Tāyumāṇavar in *Kalaikkalāñṇiyam*: Vol. V, pp. 581 f.

³⁶⁰ K.A.N. Sastry, *Op.cit.*, p. 135.

³⁶¹ V.R. Ramachandra Dikshitar, *Op.cit.*, pp. 116-124

³⁶² *Ibid.*,

³⁶³ In his *Mouṇaguru vaṇakkam*: 4, he says, ‘such a body glows like a lighted camphor. Being *cinmaya* (one of pure consciousness of wisdom) it is eternal, liberated and omnipresent’. To him the gross physical body is unreal and stinking.

³⁶⁴ *Tāyumāṇavar Pātalaḥ*, *Siddharganam* : 1-10. All these ten stanzas end with a refrain, ‘Oh! The group of Siddhas, who have reconciled the *Vēdānta* and the *Siddhānta*’, See R.Venkataraman, *Op.cit.*, p. 168

Godhead! How shall I reckon those “Blessed Ones” who have attained, by Thine Grace, to the threefold Perfection while in this human-form residing!” And, in his *Mouṇa Guru Vaṇakkam*, he paid homage to his *Guru* and also defines the Siddhas³⁶⁵.

Tāyumāṇavar was of the firm conviction that the Siddhas were a rare class of accomplished *yōgins*, endowed with enormous powers of unusual nature. He frequently mentions that the Siddhas dissolved the differences between the monistic *Vēdānta* and the pluralistic *Śaiva Siddhānta* and established compromise between the two systems. In his anthology of poems on theology and metaphysics, there are ten songs under the title *Siddhar-gaṇam* which means the galaxy of the Siddhas³⁶⁶. In these ten lengthy poems, he addresses them at the end with the refrain, “*vēdānta siddhāntā samarasanaṇ ṇilaiperra vittaka Siddhar gaṇamē*” which means ‘The Siddhas always maintained the venerable way of unifying different layers of thoughts and their advaita or oneness is deemed to be unique’. Further he says that, the Siddhas are capable of travelling all the directions and even beyond them at the speed of mind. They resemble Mount Mēru in their caliber. They shine like *Cakra-pāṇi* (Viṣṇu), visiting the gold-hued *Mahāmēru* and the pole star. They are competent to consume the whole of seven seas. They are strong enough to hold the celestial world on the one hand and the Airāvata, the white elephant and Indra’s mount, on the other as if they were balls and play with them. They can reduce the whole space into mustard seed, exhibiting the eight-fold great mountains³⁶⁷.

They bring down the good shade of the ever growing celestial *kalpaka*-tree swarmed by the humming beetles on the earth. They make the beggars become crowned monarchs. They can transmute the brick into invaluable gold, and so on. Tāyumāṇavar refers to the primal power as Gauri (the consort of Śiva) and *Kuṇḍaliyāyi*, i.e., the mother *kuṇḍalini-śakti* whose grace is indispensable in getting the ambrosia of moon (*sahasrāra*). He did not like to subscribe to the routine life of the mortars, marked by eating and sleeping. He aspired for the time to go beyond this everyday life. Further, he continues to pay glowing tributes to the Siddhas and

³⁶⁵ S.A. Sarma, *Op.cit.*, p. 26

³⁶⁶ Tāyumāṇavar *Swāmigaḷ Tiru-p-Pātal Tirattu*, in Ārumuga Nāvalar (Ed.), (N.A.), Chennai, (N.D.)

³⁶⁷ Similar thoughts are also found in the songs of Pāmbāṭṭi Siddhar; see *Pāmbāṭṭi Siddhar Songs*, Verse.28, in Kōvēndhan, *Op.cit.*, p. 249

addresses them as monarchs, who reigning the land of the eight-limbed yōga (*Aṣṭāṅga-yōga bhūmi*); covered by the dark clouds formed the royal umbrella, and offering cool shade to them. At the back of the mount *Mēru*, they established their *yōga-daṇḍa*, besides raised their banner of victory. He also describes the *Śiva-Rāja-Yōga* of the Siddhas. In the subsequent verse, Tāyumāṇavar entreated the galaxy of Siddhas to make their benign presence before him, so that he could become a silent ascetic (*mouṇi*) controlling his mind and consciousness to practise *Kuṇḍalini-Yōga*, for to consume the nectar which will provide him with deathless life. The personality of the Siddhas is depicted in the ninth verse. Tāyumāṇavar praised them as royal lions of penance (*tava-rāja-siṅgam*) and ascribed some parallels and attributes common to the Siddhas and the lions. And in the tenth verse he beautifully portrayed the polarity of thoughts, shared by the dialecticians who exhibited only their skill in debate. He also appeared for grace to the celebrated group of the Siddhas who reconciled the apparent contradictions, arising out of *Jñāna-kāṇḍa* and *Karma-kāṇḍa* on the one hand, *Vēdānta* and *Siddhānta* on the other³⁶⁸.

Thus, as the philosopher Tāyumāṇavar is held in great esteem by the followers of the pantheistical school, and the doctrines which he held respecting God and the universe may be summed up in the following lines of Pope:

*All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul;
Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glowes in the stars, and blossoms in the trees,
Lives through all life, extends through all extent,
Spreads undivided, operates unspent.*

As a poet, he certainly claims an undisputed pre-eminence over all his contemporaries. His spiritual songs, of which a collection consisting of 1453 stanzas of various meters was published at Madras in 1836, afford ample proof of his superior talents³⁶⁹.

³⁶⁸ S.N. Kandaswamy, *Op.cit.*, pp. 31-34

³⁶⁹ Simon Casie Chitty, *Op.cit.*, p. 112

Siddhar Rāmaliṅgam (1823-1874 C.E.)

Rāmaliṅga Adigaḷ is also popularly known as ‘Tiru Aruṭprakāsa Vaḷḷalār’ or shortly as ‘Vaḷḷalār’, which literally means philanthropist, most liberal or benevolent person. Rāmaliṅga adigaḷ was born in Marudūr (near Chidambaram) on Sunday the 5th October 1823, to Rāmaiah Piḷḷai and Chinṇammaiyār. When he was a child of six months, he lost his father. Then, their family settled at Karuṅkuḷi, a suburb of Chennai. His elder brother was looking after the family. Rāmaliṅga was put to school at the age of five years. At that tiny age, he had written poems on Lord Muruga. He didn’t attend the school; instead he was always engaged in reciting the poems written by him, in ecstasy, at the famous Murugaṇ temple of Kandakkoṭṭam. He used to sit alone separately in a separate room and one day when he was nine years old, he had the *darśan* of eternal light (*Aruṭjōthi*). In 1835, at the age of 12 years, he started giving discourses to the enthralled audience³⁷⁰. Though he was unwilling, his elders performed his marriage at his 21st year. He didn’t have normal married life. In 1867, an anthology of his works was published by his disciple, with his consent under the name ‘*Tiru aruṭpā tirumuṟai*’ (Divine songs of grace) or simply ‘*Aruṭpā*’³⁷¹.

His *Tiruvāruṭpā* is a collection of nearly 7000 poems written in clear and mellifluous Tamil. The text is divided into six books, only five of which were published during his lifetime. The early poems are confessional and devotional; the later ones deeply mystical. A number of them give accounts of his personal practice and experience. This work remains as a shining monument of his religious devotion, spiritual insight and poetical skill³⁷².

Rāmaliṅgar claimed to come in the line of Siddhas³⁷³ with the aim of transcending all barriers like caste and religion and to experience the Ultimate Reality³⁷⁴. He was a saint, Siddha, mystic and poet-all rolled into one. He lead the life of an ascetic, wrapped his body with white cloth. In one of his hymns he refers to

³⁷⁰ For more details, see Peter Heehs, *Indian Religions*, p. 416

³⁷¹ V.R. Ramachandra Dikshitar, *Op.cit.*, pp. 116-124

³⁷² *Ibid.*,

³⁷³ T.P. Meenakshisundaran, *History of Tamil Literature*, Annamalai University, Annamalai Nagar, 1965, p. 165.

³⁷⁴ S.P. Annamalai, *The Life and Teachings of Saint Ramalingar*, p. 1.

Śiva-śakti who graciously bestowed in him all the powers of attainments. In another poem, he has mentioned that the eternal cosmic Dancer offered him all the *siddhis*. He also addressed Śiva to be the crest jewel (diadem) and chief among the Siddhas. Śiva was an expert in performing all miracles and wonders. He named the spiritual spot *siddhi-valāgam* and *Siddhi-puram*, where he spent his last period in deep meditation and absorption.

Like Tirumūlar and the other Siddhas, Vaḷḷalār aspired to attain deathless life which he professed to have achieved due to the Divine Grace. He preached a fresh type of four-fold *puruṣārthas* viz., *ēma-siddhi* - the rare achievement providing oneself with protection; *Sāgā kalvi* - denotes the training in the processes of *Yōga* to attain immortality; *kaḍavuḷ-nilai aṟintal* - the realization of God and becoming one with Him; and *tattuva nigrāham*, the control over the *tattvas* of *māyā*, by transcending them, as against the traditional fourfold objectives viz., *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mōkṣa*. It seems that Vaḷḷalār's concept of *puruṣārtha* is peculiar to the Siddha school of thought. The conquest over the *tattvas* is the primary requisite, leading to the grand life of immortality which in the words of Vaḷḷalār is named *maraṇamilā peruvāḷvu*. Many anecdotes and episodes are recorded in his biography to prove his *yōgic* attainments and wonder-working powers. It is said that once his devoted servant maid used to keep in his room a wide oil lamp and an earthen vessel, filled with water instead of oil felicitating him to continue his writing work in the night. The next day, when the pious maid returned to serve, she wondered that the water lamp was burning throughout the night³⁷⁵.

His Mantra

Often he cared for all the people including those leading household life. For their welfare and perfect health, he prescribed manifold medicines prepared from the herbs, roots, nuts, buds, fruits, greens and other products of nature, fulfilling the requirements of a Siddha physician. He firmly believed in the *Sāhākkalai* means the art of deathlessness or immortality of the Siddhas, which he elaborately described in *Arutperuñjōthi*, the sixth book of his *Tiruvarutpā*. He insisted on practising *yōga* for attaining spiritual realization, supernatural powers and embodied immortality.

³⁷⁵ S.N. Kandaswamy, *Op.cit.*, pp.35-37

Interesting claims are made about the influence of Sūfism on Rāmaliṅgar³⁷⁶. The great mantra expounded by this Siddha Rāmaliṅgam is “*Aruṭperuñjyōthi, Taṇipperuṅkarunai! Aruṭperuñjyōthi, Aruṭperuñjyōthi!*” which means, Praise be to the Exalted Grace Divine! Praise be to the Unique-most Divine Compassion! Praise the Exalted Grace Divine!

His Formula of Revitalization

The Tamil Siddha School of therapeutics is mainly distinguished by its threefold approach to the cure and remedy of the ills that afflict humanity: *maṇi*, *mantra* and *auṣadha*. They are the three features that characterize the work and teachings of the true Tamil Siddhas and distinguish them from their counterparts, the Nātha Siddhas. *Maṇi* refers to the alchemical processing of mercury into a solidified bead, capable of achieving the desired alchemical results. *Mantra* is the Word of Power that is capable of performing the Act of Truth. *Auṣadha* is the healing of afflictions by the use of special herbals recognized as *mahauṣadhis* or *mahāmūlikas*. Alchemical writings such as *Āṇandakāṇḍam* specify certain of these special *auṣadhis* or *mahāmūlikas* as well as special *maṇis*.

A recipe for rejuvenation is prescribed in his *Tiruvāruṭpā*,³⁷⁷ The recipe is made up of four varieties of lotuses: *Senthāmarai* (red lotus) and the *Veṇṭhāmarai* (white lotus), the *Ākāsa Thāmarai* (the Skyward looking one); and *Kal Thāmarai* (stone lotus), found in the dry creeks in the surrounding hills of Rājapālayam in the far south.

His Teachings

He firmly believed that it is the hunger which lead the people to do unwanted things as often quoted in Tamil ‘*Pasi vandidāp pattum parundu pōgum*’. Therefore, he started *Samarasa Śuddha Saṅmārga Satya Saṅgam* and a *Dharmaśāla* in 1867, at Vadalūr and provided for the needy and the orphans in his boarding house. Through this *Dharmaśāla*, he converted thousands of persons into vegetarianism. Like

³⁷⁶ See R. Venkataraman, *Op.cit.*, p. 169

³⁷⁷ *Porpaṅgayatthin podunaravauñj suddha jatamum pugalkindra; Verpandaramā madimaduvum vilaṅgum pasuvin tim(b) pālum; Narpañjagamum onrai kalandhu maraṇa narai tirkum kodutthāi; Ninthranakku kaimāru edu koduppene!* See S.A. Sarma, *op.cit.*, p.101

Tirumūlar who identifies *Aṇbu* with Śiva³⁷⁸, he also advocates *aṇbu* (love) which transforms all human undertakings into a good life. It is in this sense that Siddhar Rāmaliṅgam composed his famous song on *Aṇbu*:

Thou of Himalayan vastness,
And yet how soon *Aṇbu* engulfs Thy Form;
Immortal Lord of all gods,
And yet how meekly dost Thou enter the *kudil* of *Aṇbu*,
O Primordial Substance,
And yet *Aṇbu* so enmeshes Thee in its folds;
O Nectar of Immortality,
How lightly dost Thou rest in *Aṇbu*'s Palm.
Ocean of Mercy as Thou art,
Yet so contained in *Aṇbu*'s crucible,
O Light that illumines all life and logos,
How mysteriously *Aṇbu* enshrines Thee;
O Most High God! Verily Thou art *Aṇbu* embodied!³⁷⁹

Further, he recommended four-fold behaviors, being accessories to spiritual perfection of a person such as *Indriya-oḷukkam*, denotes taming of the five-fold motor organs and sense-organs; *Kāraṇa-oḷukkam*, says about to purification of the four-fold internal instruments like *maṇas* (mind), *buddhi* (intellect), *ahaṅkāra* (ego) and *citta* (consciousness); *Jīva-oḷukkam*, denotes the maintaining of harmonious relationship with other human beings of the society without any discrimination; and the *Ānma-oḷukkam*, denotes the sympathy and affection towards all other living beings including animals and plants. Vaḷḷalār felt the necessity of ethical preparation for becoming divine. His *Siddha-mārga* enabled his personality to undergo three related types of transformations, essential for earning everlasting existence, such as *Śuddha-dēha*, *Praṇava-dēha* and *Jñāna-dēha*³⁸⁰.

But, His own teachings once brought *Rāmaliṅga* into conflict with the priestly establishment. His enemies circulated pamphlets against him to court on a trumped-up charge. His disciples began to make extravagant claims about his powers and, against his wishes, to worship him as a deity. Eventually he closed the *Jñāna Sabai* and devoted himself exclusively to his own *sādhana*. In his last sermon, delivered in January 1894, he said: “Friends, I opened a shop but there was none to purchase; so I

³⁷⁸ *Aṇbum Śivanum irandenbar aṇivilār; Aṇbē Śivamāvadevarum aṇigilār; Aṇbē Śivamāvadum Arindapin; Aṇbē Śivamai Amardirundārē. Tirumantiram Verse. 257, p.112*

³⁷⁹ Translated by S.A. Sarma, *Op.cit.*, p. 100

³⁸⁰ S.N. Kandaswamy, *Op.cit.*, p.38

have closed it. I will not be visible to your eyes for a certain period, although I will be universally present in the world... Worship God in the form of light and attain salvation”.

The end of the life of Rāmaliṅga is interesting. We already referred to his building a temple at Vadalūr. Into a certain chamber in a cottage in the village of Mēttukkuppam, near Vadalūr, Rāmaliṅga retired for contemplation. On Thursday 30th January, 1874, when he completed his fifty years of age, he entered his room and told his disciple to lock the door from outside. When the door was opened a few days later, it was found that his body had disappeared. His disciples believed that he had performed the *siddhi* of dematerialisation. At that time he was fifty-one years old³⁸¹.

Śri Ramaṇa Mahariṣi (1879-1950 C.E.)

Śri Ramaṇa Mahariṣi's real name was Veṅkatarāman. He was born in 1879. His father died when he was twelve, and he and his family went to Madurai, where he continued his education. Though he lost interest in his studies, he enjoyed reading the hagiography that tells the stories of Appar, Sundarar and other Śaiva saints. He also read the Bible (he was attending an American mission school) and bits of the Siddha-inspired poetry of Tāyumāṇavar, as well as the *Tēvāram*. He began meditating, spending most of his time at a Śiva temple. Then, when he was sixteen, he had an unexpected experience³⁸². One day, for no particular reason, he became convinced he was going to die. Instead of abandoning himself to his fear, he lay down and considered the fact of death. That which died, he realized, was the body, but the body was not the “I”. Continuing his self-inquiry, he saw that “I”, which did not die, was the one transcendent Spirit. This self-realisation, which came to him as a direct intuitive perception and not as the result of logical analysis, never left him for the rest of his life³⁸³. He became absorbed in all contemplation of the deathless Spirit which he was. He took no interest in his body, which soon was covered with insect-bites. He

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p.35; For more details, see Peter Heehs, *Op.cit.*, pp.416-417; see also S.A.Sarma, *Op.cit.*, p. 100

³⁸² Madhu Bazaz Wangu, *World Religions: Hinduism*, Vol. 6, Viva Books Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 2008 (rep), pp.116,118.

³⁸³ See also T.V. Kapali Sastry, *The Maharishi*, Sri Ramaṇāśraman, Tiruvaṇṇāmalai, 1996, pp.21-23

ate only a part of the food that people brought for him to eat, and, being disinclined to speak, said nothing³⁸⁴.

Many spiritual teachers of 19th and 20th century India expressed themselves in ways that declare their modernity. Śrī Ramaṇa *Mahariṣi* was one of the 20th century Siddhas. When one reads the talks of Ramaṇa *Mahariṣi*, one can easily forget that they were spoken by a particular individual; a man born in southern Tamiḷnādu in a family of Śaiva Brāhmins at the end of the 19th century; rather they seem to come from a timeless spiritual consciousness, which expresses itself here in the Sanskrit of the *Upaniṣāds* and there in contemporary Tamiḷ or Telugu. Śrī Ramaṇa came to be called *Mahariṣi*, meaning “great ascetic”. The appellation ‘Ramaṇa’ was given by Śrī Vasiṣṭha Gaṇapati Muṇi³⁸⁵ alias Śrī Kāvyaakaṇṭha Gaṇapati Muṇi. He was considered as the foremost disciple of Śrī Ramaṇa, who proclaimed Śrī Ramaṇa as ‘*Bhagavān Śrī Ramaṇa Mahariṣi*’ in 1907³⁸⁶.

Including *Bhagavān* Śrī Ramaṇa, many of the scholars say and believe that Siddhas are still alive, around the hills of Tiruvaṇṇāmalai. Śrī Ramaṇa himself wandered in the forest of the Tiruvaṇṇāmalai in search of the Siddhas. According to *purāṇa* there was a seat of the Siddha Aruṇagiri, who resides in the heart of the hill. For instance, when he was on the hill, Ramaṇa used to take few devotees with him for the *Giri-valam* (going round the hill). This used to last from 9 p.m. to 4 a.m. Once while he was going with his devotees/followers, he pointed his face towards the sky and said: “Look, there perhaps are the Siddhas. They (people) say they are *naksatras* (stars) and pass them by!” Further, he walked on; he observed that the very stars were beneath his feet³⁸⁷. While defining the Siddhas, Ramaṇa says that, “The effort of humanity from time immemorial has been to discover the eternal Joy (*Chit* and *Ānanda*, Knowledge and Bliss) and this has been termed *Tapasya*. The result of such an effort is not the attainment of something new but only fitting the vehicle so as to be overtaken by the ever-present Grace and be in It, and then to find that there is nothing

³⁸⁴ Peter Heehs, *Op.cit.*, p. 475

³⁸⁵ T.V. Kapali Sastry, *Op.cit.*, p.22

³⁸⁶ T.K. Sundaresa Iyer, *At the Feet of Bhagavan*, Sri Ramaṇāśramam, Tiruvaṇṇāmalai, 1996, p.88; T.K. Sundaresa Iyer, one of his disciples states that ‘Sri Ramaṇa *Mahariṣi* was an incarnation of Lord Subramaṇya’. *Ibid.* p. 98

³⁸⁷ T.V. Kapali Sastry, *Op.cit.*, pp.82 -89

but It. Wherever there is a perfect vehicle the overtaking and the expression of Grace are immediate and perfect, and such a one is termed *Mahariṣi*, *siddha*, *Jīvaṇ-Mukta* and so on”³⁸⁸.

People who visited Śrī Ramaṇa used to discuss with Him the several aspects of spiritual life and also the attainment of psychic and magical powers (*siddhi*). But he used to say that “we are all Siddhas, because it is only after very great efforts and penances that we achieved this bodily existence. The purpose of this wonderful attainment is to achieve the greatest of all attainments, i.e., the pure Existence-knowledge Bliss. In the view of a *jñāni*, these powers are no more real than those gained in a dream”. According to him *Siddhi* means “one must do to drop the ego-sense. This is the practice (*sādhana*) and this is perfection (*siddhi*) too”³⁸⁹. To illustrate this principle, Śrī Ramaṇa used to quote the story in the *Prabhulinga Līla* of a great Siddha Gōrakṣnāth. After very great efforts of various kinds, Gōrakṣnāth had perfected his physical body that it would not die even for a thousand years. He put his body to various tests, and it stood them all well, even it never be cut or pierced by the sword.

Who am I?

The *Mahariṣi*’s first works are transcripts of verbal exchanges he had with people who came to him during his early years in Tiruvaṇṇāmalai. *Nāṇ yār?* (Who Am I), a series of twenty-eight questions and answers, dates from the period around 1902, and remains one of his best-known works. In his replies, he presented the method of self-enquiry, which is the basis of his spiritual teaching³⁹⁰. Who am I? – This is a basic question of spiritual life. Sages and mystics of all religions accompany the seekers in pursuing this question. This quest takes one to the deeper realms of self-understanding (*ātmabōdha*). Ultimately all spiritual paths point to the realization of the divine dimension of our being³⁹¹.

³⁸⁸ T.K. Sundaresa Iyer, *Op.cit.*, pp.77-78

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p.74

³⁹⁰ Peter Heehs, *Op.cit.*, p. 477

³⁹¹ S. Painadath, *The Power of Silence*, Indian Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, Delhi, 2011, p. 134

I am the Self (*ātman*). I am Being-Consciousness. Being is my nature. I am the Self-aware Witness-Consciousness. I have no identity with the three states – waking, dream and sleep; they pass and re-pass in my presence. I am the knower of reality; I have my identity with the Divine. To me death means only identifying the self with the non-self. This is intoxication and this intoxication is Death. The discrimination which removes this intoxication is Immortality. This Immortality is not obtained after prolonged penance and at some distant point of time. It is obtained *here and now*. As a result of this discrimination I steady myself to enquire who I am. After this enquiry, as instructed by Benign *Guru*, I find the ‘I’ to be the real substratum, the Self ever aware. All this enquiry is only on the path, for the Final Goal is the Supreme wholeness, into which there is nothing to enquire. I am the Final Goal of the path. The reality that ‘I AM’ appears to be hidden by confusion and a veil. But by the Grace of the *Guru*, I being fixed firmly in my own reality, the veils have fallen away, both inside and out; so I am the One Indivisible, the *Tūriya* (Fourth State). Yet though it be termed the “fourth” with reference to the changing three states, yet this “fourth” is the substratum and the primal state of Being. When this “fourth” is in contact with the *Guru*’s real nature, then is established Being, and then is the One Whole³⁹².

Since then it is this Supreme and Real Self within that has taken charge of the personal self and outer being, of the mental activities, of his very bodily movements. “My *Sādhana*! The whole work was finished in twenty minutes, in less than half an hour”, said *Maharīṣi*. Hence he lays stress upon this *Sādhana* of searching for the self within one’s own being, in the heart and often mentions this as the direct method and as superior to other *Vedāntic Sādhana*s such as ‘I am He’, ‘I am Brahman’, ‘All is Brahman’, ‘All this is not self’ *nēti nēti*, etc., etc., Go deep to find They Self that is the real ‘I’; everything else can wait. Other problems can be solved afterwards if they arise,” is often his exhortation.

Ramaṇa *Maharīṣi* taught mainly by silence. People would come to him with questions in their heads or anguish in their hearts. After sitting before him, they would feel their questions vanish and their anguish disappear. Whenever he replied, instead of giving a satisfactory answer, he undermined the question by forcing his visitors to ask themselves that “Who am I?” During his later years, his talks became more

³⁹² T.K. Sundaresa Iyer, *Op.cit.*, pp.74-76

extensive, and some were noted down by disciples like T. K. Sundaresa Iyer, Kapali Sastry etc. and were published. These talks form the bulk of his teachings. His *Complete Works*, which includes his writings and translations, comprises nearly three hundred pages. Though he was not interested in philosophy and scripture, sometimes he went through books brought by others to him. Prompted by disciples, he made a number of translations of Sanskrit texts into Tamil; he also wrote a few short works in Tamil prose and poetry, along with the occasional poem in Telugu and Malayalam³⁹³.

After living for many years in shrines or in caves, the *Mahariṣi* settled at a place at the foot of Aruṇāchala where his mother, who had joined him, had been buried. A *āśram* gradually developed here and, as he became well known in India and abroad, hundreds of aspirants came to see him. He always remained accessible for part of the day to his disciples as well as visitors. Though he denied he was anyone's *guru*, he took seriously the spiritual and even the material welfare of those who came to him. In 1949, the *Mahariṣi* developed a tumour on his arm. After permitting an unsuccessful operation, he told those concerned about his health: "There is no cause for alarm. The body itself is a disease. Let it have its natural end". He left his mortal body peacefully in April 1950.

Five stanzas on the One Self

*When, forgetting the Self, one thinks
That the body is oneself and goes
Through innumerable births
And in the end remembers and becomes*

*The Self, know this is only like
Awaking from a dream wherein
One has wandered over all the world.*

*One ever is the Self. To ask oneself
"Who and whereabouts am I?
Is like the drunken man's enquiring
"Who am I?" and "Where am I?"*

*The body is within the Self. And yet
One thinks one is inside the inert body,
Like some spectator who supposes
That the screen on which the film is thrown
Is within the picture.*

*Does an ornament of gold exist
Apart from the gold? Can the body exist
Apart from the Self?*

³⁹³ Peter Heehs, *Op.cit.*, p. 476

*The ignorant one thinks "I am the body";
The enlightened knows "I am the Self".*

*The Self alone, the Sole Reality, Exists for ever.
If of yore the First of Teachers
Revealed it through unbroken silence
Say who can reveal it in spoken words?*³⁹⁴

Subramaṇiya Bhārathi (1882-1921 C.E.)

C. Subramaṇiya Bhārathi, a Brahmin by caste, was born on December 11, 1882, at Eṭṭaiyapuram in Tirunelveli District of Southern Tamiḷnādu to Mr Chiṇṇasāmy and Mrs. Lakśmi³⁹⁵. Though he was poor in his studies at school, Bhārathi became a literary prodigy during later years. He settled in Chennai in 1904 and worked as a translator and journalist. When South India was untouched by the cultural and political nationalism of the North, Bhārathi and his associates got in touch with the leaders of the Nationalist Party and promoted their views in Tamiḷ Newspapers. The patriotic poems that Bhārathi published at this time were soon on the tongue of every Tamiḷian³⁹⁶. As his poems kindled the spirit of nationalism among the people, he was suffered by the oppression of the British. Therefore, he came to Puduchērry in September 1908, to escape from the arrest by the British, and stayed there for a decade and left Puduchērry in November 1918³⁹⁷. Bhārathi returned to British India from Puduchērry in 1919. Like Swāmi Vivēkānanda, Bhārathi also could not last long and died young in 1921, as he was attacked by a temple elephant at Triplicane in Chennai.

During his brief life span, Bhārathi transformed the Tamiḷ language, long hobbled by academic conventionalism, into a powerful means of popular expression, which he used to give voice to his patriotic, social, literary and mystical interests³⁹⁸. While mentioning about him, M. Arunachalam says that "the one poet who forged a link between the past and the present and between the present and the future, who excelled in prose as well as in poetry, and who exploited journalism to a higher

³⁹⁴ These songs are the last poetic composition which contains the same teachings as those he gave his earliest disciples. Primarily it was written in Telugu by Śrī Ramaṇa at the request of a devotee and later translated into Tamiḷ. The above verses translated into English by K. Swaminathan. Quoted in Peter Heehs, *Op.cit.*, p. 489

³⁹⁵ A. Ramasamy, *History of Pondicherry*, Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1986, p. 216

³⁹⁶ Peter Heehs (ed.), *Op.cit.*, pp. 593-594

³⁹⁷ A. Ramasamy, *Op.cit.*, p. 216

³⁹⁸ Peter Heehs (ed.), *Op.cit.*, pp. 593-594

literary purpose with considerable success, was Subramaṇiya Bhārathi. The rise of this genius synchronized with the freedom fight, and in him we have perhaps the greatest national poet for all time. The passing of years will only heighten the value of his poetry; even after nationalism dies, a major portion of his poetry will live as a cherished literary legacy of the Tamils. He was a prolific writer; poetry, prose, short story, political criticism, social reform, devotional writing, and philosophical exposition flowed from his pen freely”³⁹⁹.

Subramaṇiya Bhārathi’s works can be grouped under three categories: a) nationalistic poems, b) the stray occasional verses, and c) mini-epics. His *New Āttisūdi* is a short work on the lines of Avvai’s poem, written with the stinging patriotism of a revolutionary fighter. During his stay in Puduchērry, Bhārathi composed the famous song ‘*Enṟu Taṇiyum Intha Suthantira Tāgam*’. The epics *Kuil Pāṭṭu*, *Kaṇṇan Pāṭṭu*, and *Pāñchāli Sabatham* and several poems like ‘*Suthantira Perumai*’, ‘*Suthantira Dēviyin Tuti*’, and *Suthantira Paḷḷu* were also written by him at Puduchērry. He also wrote verses in praise of ‘Siddhānātha Sāmy temple’ and Maṇakuḷa Viṇāyaka Temple in Puduchērry⁴⁰⁰.

***Tāntric* Elements in the Songs of Bhārathi**

One can find *Tāntric* elements in the songs of Bhārathi like *Śakti* worship, *yōgic* ideas and other spiritual things which are connected with the Siddhas. Like the traditional Tamil Siddhas, Bhārathi also insisted on the worship of Mother-goddess in the name of *Śakti* which is common to all Siddha fraternity. He addresses this *Śakti* as *En Maśatti* (My Own Excellent Power), a term that so endearingly identifies Bhārathi with the very *Śakti*. He also calls her as *Vaiyattadevī* (the Beloved of the Universe)⁴⁰¹. His primary literary influence remained the Tamil classics and also the poetry of the Tamil Siddhas. Zvelebil rightly points out that “not only the form and language of some of his songs, but to a great extent the imagery and the content is derived directly from Siddha poetry”⁴⁰². Bhārathi like to speak of himself as a Siddha and he tried to

³⁹⁹ M. Arunachalam, *An Introduction to the History of Tamil Literature*, Gandhi Vidyalayam, Tiruchitrāmbalam, 1974, p. 323

⁴⁰⁰ A. Ramasamy, *Op.cit.*, p. 216

⁴⁰¹ S.A. Sarma, *Op.cit.*, p. 69

⁴⁰² Kamil V. Zvelebil, *The Poets*, p.121

imitate the style of Tāyumāṇavar, whose poems are found in the style and ideas of the Siddhas.

His Poems on the Literary Style of the Siddhas

The poems of the Siddhas reflect a warm and positive attitude to the world and life. In that way Subramaṇiya Bhārathi also treated every person as the king of the country, he felt divinity in every atom of the soil and in every man and woman, he realized God in his ordinary life, in his friends, in his teachers and masters and even in his servants and sang those things in his *Kaṇṇan Pāṭṭu*⁴⁰³. The Siddhas always wrote for the ordinary folk, and had a strong preference for the people's language or in colloquial, though the subject matter may be beyond ordinary comprehension. Highly impressed by Siddha ideology and poetry, Bhārathi consciously employed Siddha folk meters and colloquialism in his poetry. He often used the *cintu*⁴⁰⁴ meter in his songs with alacrity and got undoubted success⁴⁰⁵.

The songs addressed to Kaṇṇammā by Aḷuṇi Siddha⁴⁰⁶, also inspired Bhārathi to compose his famous *Kaṇṇamma* songs. Siddha Pāmbāṭṭi is famous for his songs in *Cintu* meter and Siddha Kaduveli is famous for his *āṇanta kaḷippu* kind of meter. Tāyumāṇavar and others sung in a folk metre known as *Kilik-Kanni*. Bhārathi himself has sung one piece on those lines⁴⁰⁷. Rāmaliṅga Siddha composed his verses in the ordinary rhythm of respectable colloquial speech⁴⁰⁸. Bhārathi imitated the songs of Rāmaliṅga after understanding the rhythm and the secret of the poetic communion

⁴⁰³ Subramanya Bhārathi, *Kaṇṇan Pāṭṭu*,

⁴⁰⁴ *Cintu* is probably the most widespread musical form in Tamil folk literature. Many songs connected with rituals among the Tamils are in this meter. See also K.Kailasapathy, *On Bhārathi*, New Century Book House Pvt. Ltd, Madras, 1987, pp. 52-55

⁴⁰⁵ Therefore Bhārathidasan (1891-1964), the foremost disciple of Bhārathi and one of the great revolutionary poets of Puducherry, called Bhārathi 'the father of *Cintu*' meaning that he ushered into mainstream Tamil poetry the *cintu* which has till then largely confined to the sub stream.

⁴⁰⁶ Aḷuṇi Siddha is famous for his songs in lament tone and hence got his name as Aḷuṇi, the mourner. He has written a popular poem with mystical and *Yōgic* ideas, dressed with symbolisms which are difficult to understand. Its popularity is due to its song quality. Conceiving the Supreme Power as *Śakti* and addressing her as Kaṇṇammā, this Siddha unburdens in songs his thoughts and feelings. See A.V. Subramania Aiyar, *Op.cit.*, pp. 70-71

⁴⁰⁷ M. Arunachalam, *op.cit.* p. 271

⁴⁰⁸ Saint Rāmaliṅga's verses are mostly in *eṇcīr virutham*. He also composed musical compositions such as *Kīrttānai*, *kummi* etc. But when he evolved as a great mystic and a great poet, he preferred the rhythm of the common speech rather than the high class literary style. See T. P. Meenakshisundaran, *Papers on Linguistics and Literature*, Annamalai University, Annamalai Nagar, 1965, pp. 80-81; For more details about St. Rāmaliṅga see Peter Heehs (ed.), *Op.cit.*, pp. 416-429.

of Rāmalinga. Hence, he has written *kīrttaṇais* and also verses in the forms of *cintu*, *kaṇṇi*, *āṇanta kaḷippu*, *kāvati cintu*, *paḷlu*, etc.

Bhārathi's Association with Puducherry Siddhas

Bhārathi took asylum in Puducherry in September 1908, stayed there for a decade till November 1918⁴⁰⁹. Due to this association, he learnt many secrets of *yōgic* life and gave some references about Siddhars in his compositions. Bhārathi in one of his songs refers to a Kuḷlasāmi Siddha also known as Māṅgoṭṭai Sāmi as his 'Guru' (preceptor) who taught him the secrets of *prāṇāyāma*⁴¹⁰. Then he tells about Govindasāmy Siddhar as 'Govinda Jñāni' and his miracles⁴¹¹. It is said that Bhārathi was also initiated through 'Nayaṇa Dīkṣa' (initiation through his eyes) by Siddha Yālpānathu adigal (a Siddhar from Yālpānam i.e. Śrī Lanka). Besides them, Bhārathi refers to the Puducherry Siddhars like 'Kadarkari Āṇḍi', 'Mouṇa Sāmiyār' and 'Miḷagāi Paḷa Sāmiyār' in his songs. Meanwhile, Bhārathi also came in touch with Śrī Aurobindo. He nurtured Bhārathi's interest in the *Vēdas* and other Sanskrit scriptures⁴¹². To some extent, in his 'sixty-six' verses⁴¹³, Bhārathi declared himself as a Siddhar that 'There were many Siddhars before me; I too am one in their line'⁴¹⁴. Bhārathi used to sit and sleep in the Siddhānanda Sāmi temple at Karuvadikuppam⁴¹⁵.

His Self-Declaration as a Siddha

In his *Poyyo Meyyo* (True or False), Bhārathi presents a forceful statement of his logically realistic understanding of God, World and the Individual⁴¹⁶. In the later years, much of his writing was prophetic and far ahead of his times. Bhārathi had the poetic vision of the declaration of Indian Independence long before India got her independence on 15th August 1947, and he sung it in his *sutantira-p-paḷlu*, as

⁴⁰⁹ A. Ramasamy, *Op.cit.*, p. 216

⁴¹⁰ *Bhārathi Sixty Six, Gurukkal Sthuthi (Kuḷlasāmi Pugaḷ)*, Verse Nos.19 to 36

⁴¹¹ *Ibid.*, (*Govindasāmi Pugaḷ*) Verse Nos.37 to 39

⁴¹² For more details about Sri Aurobindo see Peter Heehs (ed.), *Op.cit.*, pp. 455-474

⁴¹³ *Bhārathi Sixty Six, (Muthar Kāṇḍam)* Verse No. 1.

⁴¹⁴ Braj Ranjan Mani, *Op.cit.*, p. 162

⁴¹⁵ Very next to this temple is a Mango grove, in which Bhārathi wrote his famous *Kuil Pāṭṭu*, therefore this grove was named as *Kuil Thōppu*.

⁴¹⁶ S.A. Sarma, *Op.cit.*, p. 67

‘*āduvōmē paḷḷu pāduvōmē āṇanda sutantiram adainthu viṭṭōm eṇḍru*’⁴¹⁷. For this kind of his prophetic attitude and predicting power, he was classified under the group of mystic poets⁴¹⁸. However, one step ahead, Bhārathi himself declared as one among the Siddhas. Bhārathi by nature was a *Śākta*. He named himself Śaktidāsaṇ. He invoked the Divine Mother reciting her manifold names such as Mahākālī, Parāśakti, Umā, Bhairavi, Manōnmaṇi, Mahāmāyī, etc., who offered him everything and who avoided him from entering into the dense forest of despair and distress. He stated that because of her immense grace, he was able to compose poems as sweet as honey⁴¹⁹.

Bhārathi, in one of his poetical works entitled ‘*Bhārathi Sixty-Six*’, speaks of the hoary Siddha tradition from which he claimed to have descended. He confesses that it is not he who so composed the verses, but the Divine *Śakti* who illuminate his intelligence and inspires the verses⁴²⁰. He declared in his autobiography that ‘There were many Siddhas before me; I too am one in their line’⁴²¹.

*Of the hallowed tradition of the Siddhas am I born-
And now am arrived here in this land!
Many an elder Siddha have I as precursors!-Mind Jewel!
Abiding within verily inspires my verses!
My Own, The Most High! Beloved of the Universe!*⁴²²

He also sung many independent songs on various national leaders, renowned Siddhas like Tāyumāṇava. The following songs are given as a specimen of his versatile fields of interests.

On Tāyumāṇavar

*You willed to live forever, A symbol of sweet Tamil.
You are young even today, Deathless like Tamil.
You knew that is utter Bliss. And That is Utter Bliss.
Part of the undying heavens, abide with our transcience too!*⁴²³

⁴¹⁷ Subramanya Bhārathi, Verse No.31, *Sutantira-p-paḷḷu*, Even today we sing this song on our Independence day and national day celebrations.

⁴¹⁸ See Peter Heehs (ed.), *Op.cit.*, pp. 593-594

⁴¹⁹ S.N. Kandaswamy, *Op.cit.*, p.40

⁴²⁰ S.A. Sarma, *op.cit.*, p. 67

⁴²¹ Braj Ranjan Mani, *Op.cit.*, p. 162

⁴²² *Enakku munnēchittar palarirundārappa; Yānum vandēn oru cittaninda nāṭṭil; Manattinile nindridanai eḷudugindral; Manōnmaṇi, En Māsatti, Vaiyattudēvi!* See *Bhārathi Sixty Six*, (*Muthar Kāṇḍam*) Verse No. 1, English version of this song is quoted in Peter Heehs (ed.), *Op.cit.*, p. 595

On Nandalālā

*I see your complexion, Nandalālā, in the crow's dark feathers.
I see the divine green, O Nandalālā, in the leaves of all the trees
Tis thy music, Nandalālā, that I hear, in all the sounds of the world
And I thrill with your touch Nandalālā, when my finger feels the flame.* ⁴²⁴

About Joy

*The world is charged with sweetness, the sky is sweetly fashioned.
The air is sweet. Fire, water, earth, all is sweet.
The sun is beneficent, the moon is beneficent.
The stars in the sky are wondrous beautiful.
Sweet is rain, lightning, thunder.
Sweet is ocean, mountain, forest, Rivers are joy-giving.
Ore, tree, plant, creeper, Flower, fruit, all give joy.
Bird, insect, animal, all, all good creatures are.
Fishes and the denizens of the deep are good.
Men are very good too.
Male and female are alike good. Childhood is blessed.
Sweet is youth, and age is sweet.
Welcome life, and welcome, death!* ⁴²⁵

His poems also provide us the evidence of the continuity of the Siddha tradition. He advocates the elimination of casteism, liberation of women and proclaims that all citizens are kings of this country (*ellōrum innāṭṭu maṇṇar*). Like many other Siddhas of yore, he too boasts of his latent powers achieved by *yōga* and discipline. To him the Lord of Death is nothing more than a trivial blade of grass. He sung that:

*The crows and sparrows are our clan.
The seas and hills are our kin.
We behold none but ourselves,
Wherever we turn our eyes.* ⁴²⁶

Thus, the great national poet of Tamilnādu, Subramanya Bhārathi inspired by the songs of Siddhas and through his direct contact with the Siddhas of Puducherry, obtained the latent occult power in him. Bhārathi is also a great Siddha apart from being a poet of the common man. He used the language of the common man in his

⁴²³ Bhārathi Songs, *Taṇi Pātalkaḷ, Tāyumāṇvar Vāḷṭhu*, pp. 256-257, for English version see Peter Heehs (ed.), *Op.cit.*, p. 595

⁴²⁴ Bhārathi Songs, *Bhakti Pātalkaḷ, Nandalālā*, No. 48, p. 159; instead of the term *Nandalālā*, Prema Nandakumar used the word 'Kṛṣṇa' in her works. See Peter Heehs (ed.), *Op.cit.*, p. 595

⁴²⁵ Bhārathi Songs, *Vasana Kaviṭhai, Iṇbam-1*, p.452, for English version, Peter Heehs (ed.), *Op.cit.*, p.595

⁴²⁶ Bhārathi Songs, *Jñāna Pātalkaḷ, Jaya Pērikai*, verse 3, p. 197; for English version see *Ibid.*, p. 595

works as the language of his poetry. He was well versed in both the elite idiom as well as the language of the folk genre.

Swāmi Siddhāṇanda

Swāmi Siddhāṇanda was born at Vaṇḍipālayam village, near Cuddalore. He lost his father in his young age and grown under the care of his mother, who engaged in the business of selling flowers and supplying garlands to the Pātalīśvara temple at Cuddalore. It is said that, in his childhood, he attained the divine powers by the grace of Lord Pātalīśvara. People believed that his words became true. He cured the diseased persons and solved the people's problems and sorrows. Therefore people started calling him as 'Siddhāṇanda Sāmīgal'⁴²⁷. As days passed, Siddhāṇanda's name, fame and his miraculous powers started to spread all over the neighbouring states. Hearing about him and his powers, one Muthukumarasāmi of Muthialpet, Puducherry, invited Siddhāṇanda to Puducherry, to cure his wife, Aṇṇammāl, who was suffering from severe stomach pain. Siddhāṇanda cured her pain. Muthukumarasāmi Piḷḷai offered his garden at Karuvadikuppam to Siddhāṇanda for his stay, (where the present Siddhāṇanda Sāmi's temple is located). It is also said that during his period of stay, Sāmi performed various miracles. He often engaged in performing *Yōga* and meditation. He lived in Puducherry till his death⁴²⁸. He performed various miracles for the benefit of the common people. When he reached the age of sixty, he predicted his death and instructed his disciples about his day of attaining *yōga-samādhi* and how to perform the rituals for the *Samādhi*. Thus, on the Tamil month of Vaikāsi 15th (25th May 1837) at the age of his sixty-five, he attained his *Samādhi*. Muthukumarasami constructed in his garden at Karuvadikuppam (in front of the Fathima Hr. Sec. School) the *Samādhi*, a small shrine on the *Samādhi*; established a big mutt, dug a well and constructed a pond to the south of the *Samādhi* shrine. Every year on the death anniversary of Sāmi Siddhāṇanda, the *Gurupūjā* is celebrated in this *Samādhi* shrine with pomp and glory. Meanwhile, in one of his

⁴²⁷ C.S.Murugesan, *Bhārathi Kaṇḍa Siddhargal*, Azhagu Pathipagam, Chennai, 2000, pp. 55-83; see also C.S.Murugesan, *Puducherry Siddhargal*, Shankar Pathipagam, Chennai, 2007, pp. 14-17

⁴²⁸ C.S.Murugesan, *Op.cit.*, pp. 55-83

songs, Bhārathi mentions about Sāmi Siddhāṇḍa⁴²⁹. He is considered as the most celebrated Siddhar in Pudukhērry.

Kuḷḷa Sāmi Siddhar

He was so named perhaps because of his dwarf form. Bhārathi adores this Siddha to be his *jñāna-guru-dēśika*, who is also named Māṅkoṭṭai Sāmi⁴³⁰. He displayed to Bhārathi the power of *Parāśakti* and the secrets of *siddhis*. The poet pays glowing tributes to his preceptor who is none other than the cosmic Dancer to him. The Siddha actually experienced the ultimate space, transcending the triple *pāl* viz., the *māyā* space, the *bodha* space and the *upasānta* space. (*Muppāl* also denotes *jīva*, *Īśvara* and *jagat*. Then, it means that the Siddha crossed the levels of soul, God and world and reached the highest reality). He showed Bhārathi the means of having contact with the celestial sphere, though living on earth. He bestowed Bhārathi the state of calmness. He was actually *Kumāra Dēva*, protected him through *kuppāya-jñāna*⁴³¹ removing the chillness of death. He was a distilled *jñāni* who cut asunder the bonds and burnt the fear complex. He bore on his head-crown the Ganges of knowledge. To measure the greatness of such a great Siddha is just to measure the sun by the chain. He made his life immortal through the application of *kāya-kalpa*.

Bhārathi narrated the context of meeting the Siddha Kuḷḷa Sāmi alias Māṅkoṭṭai Sāmi at Pudukhērry in the small house of Rājarām Aiyar; a Brahmin migrated from Nāgapattinam, while he was correcting the Tamil translation of some *Upaniṣads*, done by his father. On the arrival of the Siddha, Bhārathi became emotional, charged with piety and commenced to address him in the following way:

⁴²⁹ *Siddhāṇḍa Sāmi Tirukkōil Vāiyilil, Dīpa Oli yuṇḍām – Penne!*
Muthāṇḍa Vīdhi Muḷuthaiyum Kāṭṭida, Mūnda Thiruchchudarām – Penne!
Uḷḷath thalukkum Uḍalirk kuṟaikalum, ōṭṭavarum Chudarām – Penne!
Kaḷḷath thanangal Anaithum velippadak, Kāṭṭa varum chudarām – Penne!
Thōṇṟum Uyirgal anaithum nan renpathum, Thōṟa muruñ jchudarām – Penne!
Mūṇru vagaippadum Kālanan renpathai, Munna ridum chudarām – Penne!
Pattinān thaninulum pākkanan renpathai, Pārka Olichchudarām – Penne!
Kattu manaiyilum kōil nan renpathaik, Kāna Olir Chuddrām – Penne!; -Bhārathi, *Jñāna Pātalka*, No.14

⁴³⁰ Māṅkoṭṭai literally means the mango's nut. But, here it denotes symbolically the fruition of *Kuṇḍalini-yōga*, attained by the Siddha. Here it is right to compare the Kudambai Siddhar's song on *māṅkai-pāl*. See Kudambai Siddhar Songs, Verse 28, p. 271

⁴³¹ *Kuppāyam* means jacket or shirt. Just like changing one's shirt, the soul changes its physical body. This wisdom is noted by Bhārathi as *kuppāya-jñānam*.

Oh my Father! Preceptor! There are some people speaking of you a jñāni while others a lunatic. Some others adore that you have accomplished with Aṣṭāṅga-yōga siddhi (eight-fold yōgic attainments). I pray you to reveal your good self without indulging in rhetorics. Who are you? Why do you ramble, wrapped your body with rags and tatters? What is it that you wink like a celestial? Why do you pray with the urchins and dogs in the street? Why do you wander casting the look of Buddha? Why have you assumed the form of Supreme Śiva? Entreat you to kindly reveal your goodself.

Meanwhile, the siddha tried to escape, but Bhārathi cleverly stopped him. Looking around, the Siddha smiled and again wriggled out of his grip and ran to the fields. Bhārathi followed him and caught hold of him. Then, the Siddha taught him the basic principles of *Vēdānta* and also *Vāci-Yōga*. He further instructed him to earn personal experience (*aṇubhava-jñāna*) which alone would clear all doubts and procure salvation. Bhārathi narrated an interesting anecdote of the Siddha, occurred in a different day. He asked him the reason of carrying on his back a big sack of dust, waste and rags.

The noble Siddha smiled and replied: “*I bear the burden of dust on the outer side of my personality. But you people bear the same in your heart!*”. Through examples and precepts, symbolism and expressed language, Kuḷḷa Sāmi, the Siddha taught the poet many a message, elevating the level of his spiritual life⁴³².

Gōvinda-Jñāni

The second Siddha whom Bhārathi met when he lived in Puduchērry was one Gōvinda-jñāni alias Gōvinda Sāmi. He was a great *yōgin* and a kind mother to the afflicted beings. To his kindness, even sea could not be a comparison. He discarded delusion of anxiety and worry and experienced the divinity in all beings. One day he showed the form of the dead father of Bhārathi. Likewise, he assumed the form of his dead mother. As a result, Bhārathi came to know that the Siddha Gōvinda was not only a great *yōgin* but also a supreme *jñāni* and mystic. After taking refuge at his holy feet, Bhārathi abandoned the fear of death and attained strength⁴³³.

⁴³² S.N. Kandaswamy, *Op.cit.*, pp. 41-42

⁴³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 42-43

Yālpāṇam Kathirvēl Sāmy

Kathirvēl sāmy was a native of Śrilaṅka who came and settled in Puduchērry, near the Pāpammāl temple at Muthiālpēt and waited for the arrival of Rāmaliṅga. At Siddhāṇanda temple he engaged in deep meditation and attained miraculous powers. Then he stayed at the present ‘*Sithankudi*’ area. He taught *Kuṇḍalini yōga* to the poet Bhārathi and also demonstrated it⁴³⁴. Bhārathi portrays him as a boat of wisdom (*jñāna tōṇi*) to redeem even the sinners across the ocean of birth. He showered immense grace through his benign eyes on Bhārathi at Puduchērry. Bhārathi firmly believed that total surrender at the feet of the Siddha, thinking him nothing less than Īśvara and Śaṅkara would fetch one all the attainments. When St. Rāmaliṅga visited Puduchērry, he met him and received his blessings. He performed (*Mouṇa Vrata*) silence for eighteen days, in the Siddhāṇanda temple. Then he shifted his hut in the Kandankudi of Brindhāvaṇam area.

Daily he visited and offered worship at the Siddhāṇanda temple and returned to Brindāvaṇam. He offers food and other needful things to the needy people. One day, he gave a one rupee coin, which he produced by converting the coconut shell, to a lady who asked for help. He told her that he will give her daily one rupee only for ten days with a condition that within that period she has to search a job. He also instructed her to utilize the coin only in big shops which have good slaes and not even by mistake in any petty shops. But the lady remained lethargic without searching any job. On the tenth day, she purchased goods in a petty shop. The shop-keeper found a coconut shell in the shape of a coin in his treasure box. Then he enquired the lady, who told him that the coin was offered to her by an ascetic. The shopkeeper thought that the fake ascetic only cheated the lady. Therefore, he took the lady along with other neighbouring merchants and shopkeepers to Kathirvēlsāmy. Understanding the situation, Kathirvēl Sāmy himself burnt his hut and diverted the angry mob to control the fire. But before they could react the hut was completely gutted. The very next day, the shopkeeper saw that the hut remained there as it is without any damage. He realized his mistake and asked for apology. Sāmy laughed at him and gave him a one

⁴³⁴ Subrahmaniya Bārathi, *Bhārathi Sixty-six*, Verses No.40-41, p. 292

rupee coin to compensate the one rupee that the shopkeeper lost on that day. Then after nothing is known about his last days, or where he went from Puducherry.

Kuṇḍalāi Kaṇṇaṇ

The fourth Siddha whom Bhārathi met during his dwelling at Puducherry was Kuṇḍalāi Kaṇṇaṇ. Bhārathi praises him to be the Lord of Kailāś, mounted on the bull. Though the Siddha was born in the Brahmin caste, he denounced the caste hierarchy and treated the outcaste and others equally without any discrimination. All the hermits and ascetics were the friends of Kuṇḍalāi Kaṇṇaṇ, while the celestials were his devotees. He was an undaunted hero. It was he who brought the Siddha of Jaffna to his residence. Bhārathi stated that he decorated his heart with the lotus feet of Kuṇḍalāi Kaṇṇaṇ, and felt simultaneously the sense of eternal liberation⁴³⁵.

Other Siddhars of Puducherry Region

Apart from the above said Siddhas, there are different lists of Siddhas in Puducherry. The available lists and the legends or the historical facts reveal the continuity of the Siddha tradition in Puducherry. There are no authentic records or sources available to know about their history. However, based on C.S. Murugesan's work *Puducherry Siddhargal*, and various lists found in the popular Siddha shrines, and personal interviews conducted by me with the devotees of respective *Siddha-Kṣētras*, following information is gathered which is presented here on the chronological basis. (See Appendix 2)

Pavalakodi Siddhar

The *samādhi* shrine of Pavalakodi Siddhar is located at Sōmbaṭṭu village of Maṇṇāḍipattṭu Commune of Puducherry. Around 17th century, this Siddha lived in a forest on the way to Virudhāchalam. Due to the efforts of one Dalavāi Reddy of Sōmbaṭṭu village, he came to this village and stayed there. People called him as Pavalakodi Siddhar. Since he used such kinds of herbals to cure the diseases, he got that name. It is also said that, there are two villages named Pavalakodi and Pavalāṅkādu near Virudhāchalam. He made a physically handicapped to walk, cured leprosy, etc. He also had the power of foretelling. He himself announced about his

⁴³⁵ Subramaniya Bhārathi, *Bhārathi Sixty-six*, Verses No.42-44, 292-3; S.N. Kandaswamy, *Op.cit.*, p.43

end. One day he informed about his *samādhi* to Dalavāi Reddy. By his instruction, they also constructed the cemetery (*samādhi*) at Sōmbaṭṭu village. More than hundred years, it lost its importance. But very recently, i.e. after 2011, it again got more importance and usual oblations, *gurupūja* on January 16th, etc. are conducted regularly in a grand manner⁴³⁶.

Śri Nāgaliṅga Sāmy

Śri Nāgaliṅga sāmy was the 10th pontiff of Śri Ambalathādum Iyer *Matha* of Chidambaram. When Mālik Kafur invaded India, particularly South India, Chidambaram was under his threat. Therefore, he took two of his disciples, covered the statue of Māṇickavāsaga, donated by the Pāṇḍya ruler, with palm leaf manuscripts and some oblation articles, and packed with silk cloth and carried it in a palanquin like a corpse. They reached Puduchērry via Cuddalore. Since it is procession of dead body, the soldiers left them to move. Meanwhile, Chidambaram was demolished by Mālik Kafur.

At Puduchērry, Nāgaliṅga sāmy stayed in a hut near the sea shore and continued his *matha* works. The palm leaves were kept in a silver casket and pūjas were conducted daily. The fame of Nāgaliṅga Sāmy began to spread in Puduchērry region. He performed many miracles like regaining one's eye sight, speech to a dumb and so on. During his last days, he appointed one of his senior disciples as an eleventh pontiff of the *matha*. After his death, his disciples constructed his *Samādhi* in the *matha* itself and installed a *Śivaliṅga* on it. Every year on the Tamil month of Āṇi, 7th *Gurupūjā* is conducted to him. Even today, daily *pūjās* were conducted to the Silver casket containing the palm leaf manuscripts, and every year on *Mahāśivarātri*, the casket was opened and offered oblations. In his honour, the French Government named this street as Ambalathādum Iyer Madam St. and also often honored the head of this *matha* in all of its public functions⁴³⁷.

⁴³⁶ Due to efforts taken by the villagers with the help of Puduchērry Chief Minister Rangasamy, the *samādhi* shrine was again renovated and oblations were continuing therein of. Interview with K. Purushothamma Reddy, (68), Reddy St. Sōmbaṭṭu village. 16.1. 2012.

⁴³⁷ C.S.Murugesan, *Puduchērry Siddhargal*, pp. 35-42

Śri Śaktivēl Paramānanda Siddhar

Arutguru Śri Śaktivēl Paramānanda Siddhar was the native of Cuddalore. He was born in a rich family. His father was died when he was a child hence protected by his brothers. After his father's death the assets were divided into five shares. His brothers are too concentrated on his assets instead of caring on him. Therefore he divided his assets into four equal divisions and gave to his brothers and then left from his home. From his childhood he was interested in worshipping Dēvi Parāśakti. After visiting many temples, finally he settled near Mudaliārpēt near Puduchērry town. There he started meditating in a coconut grove Dēvi Paraśakti and worshipped her formless image. He also helped the needy through his divine powers, therefore devotees gathered around him. Since he gave blissfulness to all, his real name 'Śaktivēl' was called with the suffix as Śaktivēl Paramānanda Siddhar. One day he informed his close disciples about his *samādhi* and also told them about coming of railway line and a big factory near his mutt in future and thousands of families will be benefited through them. Then he attained his *samādhi* on 23rd of Tamil month Ādi. He was buried at the place he showed. Every year on that day, the *gurupūjā* was celebrated. At present, nearer to his *samādhi* shrine, the Anglo French Textiles and a railway line was constructed. Then after a long period of interval, again from 1998 onwards, with the efforts made by the employees of AFT mills, the *gurupūjā* is celebrated continuously, and also big *maṇḍapa* was constructed very recently (2012) in this *samādhi* shrine. It is said that he was the contemporary of Siddha Rāmaliṅga⁴³⁸.

Śri Tēṅgāi Sāmigaḷ (Villianūr)

The *Samādhi* of Śri Tēṅgāi Sāmigaḷ is situated at Taṭṭāñchāvady, just opposite to the electricity sub-station of Villianūr, in the northern side of the Villianūr – Puduchērry high ways. It is a small temple –like structure made up of iron sheets in which a *liṅga* is installed. No much information is available about this Siddha. It is believed that he stayed at Oḷugarai. When he went to Guruvappa Nāyakan Pālayam, he was welcomed by village elite and offered a hut in a paddy field at Maṇaveli Road,

⁴³⁸ C.S.Murugesan, *Op.cit*, 2007, pp. 155-161; Interview with S. Muthukrishnan, (58), S/o. Subburayan, Vanrapettai, Puduchērry, 12.12.2009.

to continue his spiritual works. When the devotees came to him with troubles, he asked them to break the coconut into two pieces and tell them their fortunes, from the scenes which he saw in the coconut halves. Since he solved the problems with the help of the coconut, people started to call him as ‘Tēṅgāi Sāmiga!’.

Another story about him is that, every year on the 18th day of Tamiḻ Month Ādi, Sāmy used to break eighteen coconuts on his devotees’ head and solved their problem. Thus he got this name. For some years he did herbal treatment to the people. Then he engaged in *yōgic* practices, and attained *samādhi* under a *Bilva* (*beyal*) tree in a groove at Taṭṭāñchāvady. Every month on first Monday special *pūjās* are conducted. For some years it is continued and later discontinued. Then a teacher from Oḷugarai started to visit and worship every week. Few years back the damaged hut was renovated with Iron sheets (as it looks today) and made it as a place of worship. Now *Gurupūjā* was celebrated every year. At present (2014), foundation is laid for a concrete building⁴³⁹.

Śri Rāma Paradēsi (Villianūr)

The Rāma Paradēsi mutt is situated near Perambai road, to the north of Villianūr- Puduchērry high way in Villianūr. Being a Siddha’s mutt people did not show much interest on this initially and earlier it was in a small concrete tomb. As a symbol of *Samādhi*, a *Tuḷasi Mādam* was placed in an elevated portico. An image of Rāma Paradēsi was sculpted in a stone slab and an inscription belongs to *Saka* year 1781 (C.E. 1868) found there mentions about him in both Tamiḻ and English languages⁴⁴⁰.

1. *Om*
2. *Mahātma*
3. *Rāmaparadēsi*
4. *Swāmiyār*
5. *Samādhi*
6. *Sālivāhana Sakāpṭham 1791*
7. *TOMB OF*
8. *RAMAPARADAS*
9. *1868*

⁴³⁹ Interview with Mr. Arumugam, (48), care-taker of the *samādhi* shrine, Taṭṭāñchāvady. See also C.S.Murugesan, *Puduchērry Siddhargal*, pp. 88-90

⁴⁴⁰ See also G. Vijayavenugopal (ed.), *Inscriptions of Puducherry*, Vol. I, (Villianur Inscription No. 420), French Institute of Indology, Pondicherry, 2006, p. 374. And also see Villianur N. Venkatesan, *Varalātril Villianūr* (Tamiḻ), Sekar Pathipakam, Chennai, 2001, p.186.

People tell many stories on him as they like. It is said that, he was a native of Āndhra. He lost his mother in his childhood. Thus he renounced his desires on worldly life. He wandered here and there to take care of his father. After his father's death, he came to Puduchērry by walk and settled in Villianūr. When the villagers saw this young ascetic, they started enquiring like who he was?, where he came from?, and so on. But for all their questions he only answered as 'Rām! Rām!!'. Therefore, people called him as 'Rāma Paradēsi'. Villagers made a small hut to him and offered him food on routine basis; due their love he accepted it for once in a day. It is said that once he cured snake bite of a person, then he became more popular for his miracles and power. He foresaw his death, as well as an attack of a big storm in the next month. Therefore, he asked the villagers to shift their houses. But they didn't believe. But in 1840, on one Monday, suddenly heavy rain was started, which led to severe floods. Many villagers died including Rāma Paradēsi. In 1868, the French Government planned to construct a railway line. When they dug the place, they found a body in sitting posture. Then they identified that it was the body of the Rāma Paradēsi, who died here eighteen years back. Then, they shifted the body and buried and a small *samādhi* shrine was constructed. Recently, the villagers of Villianūr built a huge and beautiful *maṇḍapa* there. Now it is worshipped as a place for getting peace. Farmers visit this shrine, before starting their agricultural activities⁴⁴¹.

Aḷagappa Siddhar (1800-1840 C.E.)

Thennampākkam village is located to the southwest of Puduchērry near Ēmbalam. This village is famous for its Aḷagu Muthu Iyanār temple and Aḷagar festival. It is a very peaceful place located with tamarind grove. One can witness now a large number of concrete statues in human forms with different kinds. Mostly these statues depict the images of children or different parts of the human body, children with books, etc. Because there prevails a belief in this place that those who are in want of a children, may install a statue of a child, will get a child, those who want better education to their child will install a child with reading a book. Similarly, if anybody found with physical handicap will offer a replica of the parts like leg, hand, eye, etc. All these beliefs are came into vague because of one Aḷagappa Siddhar who

⁴⁴¹ Interview with Mr. Baskar, (62), Perambai village, 5.1.2010; C.S.Murugesan, *Op.cit*, 2007, pp.91-99

stayed here. It is said that he cured many diseases and solved the problems of the devotees. Often he had meditated under the well, located nearer to the Iyanār temple. One day he did not come out of meditation and attained *samādhi* inside the well. Then after every year on the Tamil month of Cittirai, Aḷagar temple festival is celebrated. The well is decorated and oblations were conducted to it. Due to its divinity, the well is now closed and a cemetery was constructed on its top. One Kumaḷam, K. Rāmānujam wrote some divine songs on Aḷagar Siddhar. It is believed that he lived in between 1800 to 1840 and attained his *samādhi* at the age of his forty⁴⁴².

Akkā Paradēsi Sāmy (d. 1872 C.E.)

Akkā-paradēsi-sāmy became a staunch devotee of Lord Viṇāyaka at his very young age. He made an idol of Viṇāyaka in clay and worshipped it. One day a woman also worshipped the idol. Due to his extreme bliss, he kissed in her hands. But she scolded the boy. Then after, started calling all the women as ‘*Akkā*’, means elder sister. Therefore, he was named as Akkāparadēsi Sāmy. After sometime he worked as a policeman at Ginjee. But not interested in his work, again he returned to Puducherry. To him one Nārāyaṇa paradēsi became the disciple who often begged food for him. It is also said that he meanwhile went to Śrīlaṅka and performed some miracles, then returned to Puducherry; he gave vision to the blind; punished two prostitute women who misbehaved with him and so on. Finally, he attained his *samādhi* on June 1872. A *samādhi* shrine known as *Akkā Sāmy Siddhar Pītam* was constructed at Vālaikuḷam of Puducherry. The street also bears the same name, named after him. In that shrine, the clay Viṇāyakar made by the Akkāparadēsi, and a grinding stone which he used for making herbal medicines are also kept in his memory⁴⁴³.

Śri Dakṣiṇāmūrthy Sāmigaḷ (d. 1909 C.E.)

The *samādhi* of Śri Dakṣiṇāmūrthy Sāmigaḷ is located at Thennal village, on the Viḷupuram-Puducherry highways. To the left of his *samādhi*, an Iyanār temple and a pond is exists. The idol of Śri Dakṣiṇāmūrthy Sāmigaḷ is installed on an elevated

⁴⁴² Interview with S. Sethuraman Nāidu, (61), Embalam village; see C.S.Murugesan, *Op.cit*, 2007, pp.146-149.

⁴⁴³ Interview with Mr. Arumugam and Calaiarassy (58), Akka Samy Madam St., (7.7. 2011); C.S.Murugesan, *Op.cit*, 2007, pp. 67-84.

portion of the *samādhi*. One Varadharāja Counder of this village was found too closer as a disciple to this Siddhar. He was protected by one Lakśmi Nārāyaṇa Reddy of Thennal village. After performing many miracles he attained *samādhi* on 07.07.1909. Every year on this day, his *Gurupūjā* is celebrated with pomp and glory by these villagers. At present, a foundation is laid for constructing a big concrete building in front of this *samādhi*. Besides, one of his disciples V. Kanaka Periyasāmy Nāyakkar of Arumpārthapuram wrote a dozen of songs on him⁴⁴⁴.

Śri Lakśmaṇa Sāmigaḷ (d. 1947 C.E.)

This Siddha often wandered in the roads of Mīṇāchipēt in Puducherry. Nothing is known about his early life. He spoke Telugu mixed Tamil. He often did small works in the houses of Mīṇāchipēt and stayed in the Amman temple during night times. He went on fasting during these times. People believed that he often spoke with Goddess Ambika. Therefore, local women approached him and told their problems for getting remedies. As a result, mob gathered during times in the temples. Understanding its harmfulness, he stopped staying there at night and migrated to Puducherry big market and worked as a load-man in the market.

One day, on a peak hour in business, Sāmy appeared as too sad and sat in the middle of the road under hot sun. Drivers, police and others tried a lot to remove him but they failed. Thus, traffic was diverted. Meanwhile, people started worshipping him. On the fourth day, there started heavy rain with lightning and thunder. But still he sat there without any movement for eighteen days. When he woke up, he looked at all and laughed. Somebody feared at him that he was a mad and somebody worshipped him as a Siddha. Too many changes found in him. He migrated to Muthiālpēt and stayed there. People looked him as a god. Merchants treated him respectfully in their shops. But he ever stayed permanently. A Shopkeeper offer him one snuff strip and continue his business. In that shop, Sāmy took one 1 rupee coin and threw it away. The whole day there was a good business in that shop. On another day, in a shop, Sāmy tried to take the coin from the cash box. But the shop owner slapped him. Thus Sāmy walked silently towards north from Muthiālpēt to

⁴⁴⁴ Interview with Pulavar Kalamegam, (77), Thennal Village, 29.11.2010; C.S.Murugesan, *Op.cit*, 2007, pp. 125-138.

Kīlputhupēt Iyannar temple. There he sat in *padmāsana* and attained his *Samādhi*. Morning people visited him as a crowd and put him into *Samādhi*⁴⁴⁵. Even today his *Samādhi* is maintained in a good manner⁴⁴⁶.

According to another tradition, Lakśmaṇasāmy was born at Śaṇmugāpuram, to Paramaśivan and his wife. He got married Muṇiammāl, but he frustrated in family life. Then he became an ascetic and stayed in Mīṇāchipēt. As an ascetic, he was too popular and people praised him. Some persons from Puthupēt invited him to lay the foundation stone by his hands. He migrated from Mīṇāchipēt to Puthupēt in 1947 and died there. He was also known as ‘*Sāṅku Sāmiyar*’. It is recorded that “On 1947, 12th month, 21st day, he attained *samādhi*”⁴⁴⁷.

Śri Dēvarāssu Siddhar (d. 1948 C.E.)

Śri Dēvarāssu Siddhar was lived in Puduchērry in between 1935 to 1948. He was found with dust clothes near Muthiālpēt. He stayed there in the Murugaṇ temple, constructed by one Miḷagāipaḷa Siddhar. One day somebody noticed that he was found with his limbs detached from his body. But on the next day, he found normal. For some days it was became the continuous news in that area. He attracted many devotees and solved their problems. After sometimes he was wandered near Marakkāṇam region. Then he attained his *samādhi* at Vaṇṇiya Nallūr village, which is located near two kilometers from Sūṇāmpēdu village of Madurāntakam Taluk. It is said that he attained *samādhi* on 22.06. 1948, nearly at the age of his 75; and he also had two disciples in Puduchērry named Gōvindasāmy and Rājappā⁴⁴⁸.

Śri Aurobindo (1872-1950 C.E.)

Śri Aurobindo’s real name is Aurobindo Ghosh. He was born in Kolkata (Calcutta) in 1872. When he was born, Bengal had been under British rule for more

⁴⁴⁵ C.S.Murugesan, *Puduchērry Siddhargal*, pp. 178-182

⁴⁴⁶ At present, the *Samādhi* is situated nearly 300 mts, to the west of the Iyannār temple. A roof is laid on that with cement sheet with mosaic floor. Now a hand pump is also installed for drawing drinking water. His statue in a sitting posture is installed facing east in the *Samādhi*. There is a *liṅga* at the head and a Nandi at the foot. No periodical or regular *pūjās* are conducted. People used to visit there very rarely. No annual *Gurupūjās* are conducted.

⁴⁴⁷ Sri Lakśmaṇa Samy’s Life history given in a notice published by T. Vaithialingam, 72, V.O.C. st, Shanmugapuram, Puduchērry

⁴⁴⁸ C.S.Murugesan, *Op.cit*, 2007, pp. 162-169.

than a century. He left Kolkata in 1879 and was educated for fourteen years in England and left them in the care of a Manchester clergyman. There Aurobindo excelled as a scholar at St. Paul's School in London, and at King's College in Cambridge, he mastered in English, Latin, Greek and French. In 1890, he selected for the Indian Civil Service and completed the course and returned to India in 1893. Aurobindo remained in Baroda for thirteen years, working in various government departments and teaching at the local college. He also read deeply in English, Sanskrit and Bengali literature, and wrote poetry, essays and translations. In India he entered the State Service of Baroda and began to broaden his education with more intensive study of Indian languages and culture and to practice *Yōga*. From around 1902 he began to organise a secret society that, in the wake of the government's partition of Bengal, took part in some small revolutionary acts. He also became involved in the current political and social turmoil. The partition of his native Bengal in 1905 drew him into the nationalist movement to become the leader of the so-called Bengal terrorists. Settling in Kolkata in 1906, for four years he led his Nationalist party against the moderates of the Indian Congress. In 1908, He was arrested on suspicion of involvement in a bomb plot and jailed for sedition. While in Alipūr jail he underwent a religious experience which completely reshaped his life, reaching a state of *Samādhi* through *Yōga*.

After his release he abandoned politics and in 1910 travelled secretly to Puduchērry, a French settlement. There he established a *āśram*, wrote many works and developed his own philosophy, the *Integral Yōga*. In 1914 Aurobindo met a Frenchwoman named Mirra Alfassa, who had studied occultism in Algeria with a Kabbalistic master, and had contract with teachers like the Sūfī Hazrat Inayat khan and Abdul Baha, the leader of the Bahais. In 1920 Mirra settled in Puduchērry, where she became the centre of the spiritual community that was forming around Aurobindo. In 1926 he handed over the charge of this *āśram* to Mirra, and retired from public view. After 1926, Aurobindo was popularly called as Śrī Aurobindo and Mirra as 'the Mother'. For the next twenty-four years, he remained in an apartment in his house, practising *yōga*, writing poetry, and answering questions posed by disciples. A selection of his letters, ranging in subject from metaphysics to the minutiae of daily life, was later published in five large volumes. Śrī Aurobindo spent the last years of

his life working on a symbolic epic poem, *Sāvitri*. He died of kidney failure in 1950. Then after, ‘the Mother’ continued to run the *āśram*⁴⁴⁹.

There is a dramatic contrast between the earlier and later life of Aurobindo, a shift from politics to religion which reverses the trend of the Ārya Samāj. Three years before his arrest, Aurobindo had begun the practice of *yōga* with the idea of getting power to help him in his work. After a few years of solitary *sādhana* he met a Maharāṣṭrian *yōgin* named V. B. Lele, who showed him how to silence his mind. This led to the experience of the “Passive Brahman”, in which the Divine alone is seen as true, while the universe appears to be unreal. A few months later, while in jail awaiting trial for conspiracy, Aurobindo had the wider experience of the Divine as simultaneously transcendent of and immanent in the universe. This came to him as a vision of Kṛṣṇa in all things and beings, which revealed to him the higher levels of consciousness that, link the manifested world to the un-manifest Divine. One of these, the super-mind, became the key to his future *sādhana* and the central term of his philosophy. Aurobindo believed that this power could transform human life into a divine existence. The goal of spiritual discipline was not an escape from the round of *samsāra* but a state of individual and collective perfection in the body and on earth⁴⁵⁰.

Aurobindo’s thought was basically another *Yōga* system, though incorporating elements of terminology from other systems. His major innovative works were conceived and written in English and the best known being *The Life Divine*. However, his system does give a more definite place to the world, which possesses real value, and Aurobindo believed firmly in evolution, seeing its goal as the divinization of man, an extension or transference to the human race as a whole of *tāntric* ideas about perfecting the body. Indeed he explains the title of *Integral Yōga* which he gave to his system as expressing the blending of the different *Yōga* systems each with its own approach through body, mind and so on. As he puts it in one of his tracts for disciples, ‘*Yōga* means union with the Divine – a union either transcendental (above the universe) or cosmic (universal) or individual or, as in our *Yōga*, all three together’.

⁴⁴⁹ J.L. Brockington, *Op.cit.*, pp. 183-184; see also Peter Heehs (ed.), *Op.cit.*, p. 455

⁴⁵⁰ Peter Heehs (ed.), *Op.cit.*, p. 455

Śri Aurobindo's Teaching and Method of *Sādhana*

The teaching of Śri Aurobindo starts from that of the ancient sages of India that behind the appearances of the universe there is the Reality of a Being and Consciousness, a Self of all things, one and eternal. All beings are united in that One Self and Spirit but divided by a certain separativity of consciousness, an ignorance of their true Self and Reality in the mind, life and body. Śri Aurobindo's teaching states that this One Being and Consciousness is involved here in Matter. Evolution is the method by which it liberates itself; consciousness appears in unconsciousness, and once having appeared is self-impelled to grow higher and higher and at the same time to enlarge and develop towards a greater and greater perfection. Life is the first step of this release of consciousness; mind is the second; but the evolution does consciousness which is spiritual and supra-mental. The next step of the evolution must be towards the development of Super-mind and Spirit as the dominant power in the conscious being. For only then will the involved Divinity in things release itself entirely and it became possible for life to manifest perfection. This method is to be found through the ancient psychological discipline and practice of *Yōga*. In the past, it has been attempted by a drawing away from the world and a disappearance into the height of the Self or Spirit. Śri Aurobindo teaches that a descent of the higher principle is possible which will not merely release the spiritual Self out of the world, but release it in the world, replace the mind's ignorance⁴⁵¹.

Thus, Śri Aurobindo, along with the Mother, contributed too in the field of divine philosophy as well as to the spiritual subjects. For his divine works and appearance, he is still celebrated as a great Siddha of Puduchērry. Even today, the *Samādhi* worship of Śri Aurobindo and the Mother is remarkable one, which remains as a remnant of continuing tradition of the Siddha cult, which attracts more number of foreigners, than the local people. As a well-known fact, he taught the *Vēdas* and *Upaniṣāds* to the national poet and Siddha Subramaṇiya Bhārathi. And also he was the contemporary of Śri Ramaṇa *Mahariṣi* of Tiruvaṇṇāmalai. Even after the death of Śri Aurobindo, many Siddhars lived and living in Puduchērry.

⁴⁵¹ Peter Heehs (ed.), *Op.cit.*, p. 465

Vēdānta Siddhar (1872-1962 C.E.)

The real name of Vēdānta Siddhar was Tāṇḍvarāyan. He was born in 1872, at Tirumarugal village of Tamiḷnādu, as the second son of Chokkaliṅga Mudaliyār. At his 12th age, he got interested in going pilgrimages and went out from his home. Then he became the disciple of one Rājagiri Periyar at Virāli Malai and learnt *Vēdānta*, *Tiruvāsagam* and other songs of the Siddhars from him. Then he met Mouṇa Siddhar at Chidambaram. Then went to Tiruvāvadudurai and studied *Prabhuliṅga Līlai*, *Śivajñānabōdham* from Appāvu Piḷḷai. Then he met Sāmi Vivēkāṇanda near Tirunelvēli, which resulted in dragging him again to the family life. He went back his home and got married his elder sister's daughter. As a part of his life, he started a business and also decided to settle in Puduchērry, which was under the French. Meanwhile he fathered two male and one female child. But after his wife's death, he again became an ascetic. At the same time he ran a *Vēdānta Pātasāla* at Chetty Street of Puduchērry. Therefore, people called him as Vēdānta Sāmiyār and Vēdānta Siddhar. He also got many disciples. He got more famous among the people of Puduchērry. But soon, due to his old age, his eyes became blurring and he also wants to take rest. At last, he was died on 17.09.1962, and his body was buried at Vasanth Nagar near Muthiālpēt. At present a temple was constructed on his *samādhi* and the principal deity was named as 'Vēlāyudha Īswarar'⁴⁵².

Maṇṇuruṭṭi Sāmigaḷ (d. 1965 C.E.)

The real name of Maṇṇuruṭṭi Sāmigaḷ was Rāmakriṣṇan. His father Muṇisāmy Piḷḷai was a Tamiḷnādu policeman and his mother Raṅkanāyaki. Muṇisāmy had three male and three female children and one of them was Rāmakriṣṇan. When he was studying his final year undergraduate course, he dragged into the mystic world and stopped speaking with others. Therefore, others thought that something was happened to him. But soon he left his home and started doing meditation in the forest of Tiruvaṇṇāmalai. When his parents requested to come back, he silently followed them to Paraṅgipēṭṭai (Portonovo) near Chidambaram. After her mother's death, he moved to Cuddalore and then to Puduchērry. In Puduchērry he was named as 'Maṇṇuruṭṭi' means one who rolls the soil like beads. Because, when he was thinking deeply he had

⁴⁵² C.S.Murugesan, *Op.cit*, 2007, pp. 183-190.

the habit of rolling the soil by his fingers. Soon he also had the power of foretelling one's death. In Puducherry, he stayed in one of his follower's house named Jīvarathīṇa Udayār at Kuyavar Pālayam. On January 16, 1965, he attained his *samādhi* and his body was buried at Govindasāmy Piḷḷaihoṭṭam near Swadēsi Cotton Mills⁴⁵³. At present, it is surrounded by many buildings and one has to reach this place through a mechanic shed.

Vālapala Sāmiyār

The native place, birth and other biographical details of Vālapala Sāmiyār is not known to anybody. For sometimes, he wandered near the Sāram region of Puducherry. He dwelled among the pigs, in the midst of the drainage with dust clothes. It is said that daily morning a cow came to him; he offered a banana and worshiped the cow. How he got the banana and from where the cow came to him was remained obscure. Hearing this, day by day, devotees gathered to meet him, but he refused. However, he had two disciples at last. To them he foretold about the coming of government buildings and an Amman idol to be unearthed from the place he stayed. After few years, the government automobile workshop, and the Puducherry Collector Office were established in that place. Besides, an idol was also unearthed when the place was dug for laying foundation to those government buildings. Therefore, the place was named after the idol as 'Śakti Nagar'⁴⁵⁴.

Sadai Thāyārammāl

Sadai Thāyārammāl lived near Pākkamudaiyānpēt in Puducherry. Since she was found with a long matted hair (*Sadai*), and appeared to be a mother (*Thāyār*), she was called as 'Sadai' Thāyārammāl. During her childhood, she lived near Perumukkal Hills, an ancient archeological and historical site famous for its rock bruising. One day, when she happened to stay in the temple which is located on the top of the hill, she met a Siddhar and learnt about the herbal medicines from him. She worshiped the idol that was being worshipped by the Siddhar. Then she left her home and went to Puducherry and engaged in meditation in one of her relative's house. She could solve

⁴⁵³ Interview with Mr. Madhavan (72) and Balakrishnan, (70), devotees, Viduthalai Nagar, Mudaliarpet, 09.09.2010; C.S.Murugesan, *Op.cit*, 2007, pp. 108-115.

⁴⁵⁴ C.S.Murugesan, *Op.cit*, 2007, pp. 85-87.

the physical and mental ailments of the people through the sacred ashes and medicines⁴⁵⁵. Subsequently, where she went and when she died remains unknown.

Murugaṇadimai Patchaiyammāl (1927-1981 C.E.)

Murugaṇadimai Patchaiyammāl was born on 19.06.1927 to Subburathiṇam and Taiyalnāyaki. She got married at the age of eighteen to one Taṇḍapāṇi, son of Duraisāmy and Pōṟsilai; and resided at *Sālai Theru* of Puduchērry town. After six years of her marriage she delivered a female child. She happened to meet a Siddhar at Paḷaṇi and got initiation from him and became a great devotee of Lord Muruga. After engaging herself in deep meditation she gained the miraculous power of foretelling. However, she continued to lead her family life till she was 27 years old. During her lifetime she was engaged in foretelling, removing witchcrafts, and performance of many miracles like a Siddha. She breathed her last on 01.11.1981. As a staunch devotee of Lord Muruga she earned the name ‘*Murugaṇadimai*’ (slave of Murugaṇ) and people worshipped her as a most powerful female Siddhar⁴⁵⁶. She was buried at Muthiālpēt grave yard. A small shrine was constructed at that place and every year *gurupūja* is also celebrated.

Śri La Śri Māthāji Siddhar (1908-1998 C.E.)

Śri La Śri Māthāji Siddhar @ Śri Rāja Nārāyaṇāṇanda Siddhar’s real name is Rājam. She was born to Mr. Paḷaṇi and Muthulakshmi, in 1908. She got married one Nārāyaṇsāmy, who was also considered as a Siddhar. After their marriage, they shifted to Paraṅgipēṭṭai and stayed there for five years. A female child Maṇi and a male child were born to them. Then they shifted to Mailāduturai. Her husband died on 30.8.1964. Subsequently, in 1969, she migrated to Puduchērry and stayed there for nearly thirty-three years. In between, she had visited almost all the important pilgrim centres of India. She also visited Śrilaṅkan temples. She passed away on 25.11.1998, at the age of ninety. She was born on *Tiruvōṇam* star, Wednesday and died on the day of same star *Tiruvōṇam* and Wednesday⁴⁵⁷. Her only son, Ōṅgāraṇanda, is running a

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 116-124.

⁴⁵⁶ Interview with Mr. Chakravarthy (72), and Deivānai (63), devotees, Thennaṅjsalai Road, Puduchery, 13.11.2010; C.S.Murugesan, *Op.cit*, 2007, pp. 203-221.

⁴⁵⁷ Swāmy Ōṅgāra Nanda, *Ōṅgāram*, ‘Śri La Śri Māthāji Siddhar’ (spl issue), Vol. 42, No.6, 15.11.2013, pp. 18-20

āśram on his name at Puduchērry and propagating his parent's ideologies to the world through a monthly magazine called 'Ōṅgāram'⁴⁵⁸.

Appā Paithiyam Sāmy (d. 1999 C.E.)

Appā Paithiyam Sāmy was a native of Vēṭtaikāran Pudūr, near Pollāchi of Coimbatore district. He belonged to family of landlords and left his home at the age of six. Then after he met one Aḷukkusāmy at Paḷaṇi hills and became his disciple. He got some *siddhis* from him. Since he used to smoke 'bīdi', he was also called as 'Bīdi Sāmiyār'. Then he roamed many villages and towns like Udumalaipet, and performed some miracles like healing the diseases, solving the problems of his devotees, removing witchcrafts, etc. He also was having the knowledge of foretelling. He also roamed for some period in Puduchērry and attracted most of the popular politicians and higher government officials. For him, one Tiruthurai Pūṇḍi Natarājan established a *āśram* at Karuvadikuppam of Puduchērry⁴⁵⁹.

Appā Paithiyam Sāmy attained his *samādhi* on 11.2.1999 on Friday night at 9.00 PM., at the age of his 144(?). At Salem, a *samādhi* shrine with his idol was also constructed. Mr. Raṅgasāmy, the Chief Minister of Puduchērry (2011-2016) is a staunch devotee of this Appā Paithiyam Sāmy. He will take all important decisions only after visiting and worshipping his spiritual *guru*. After he won the 2011 legislative assembly elections with thumping majority and successfully formed his government, he constructed a new shrine similr to the one at Salem, with his statue of Paithiyam Sāmy, behind the Gōrimēdu police station. Every year on 28th of the Tamil month Cittirai, his birth anniversary is celebrated in a grand manner.

From the above study, it is clear that the cult of Siddhas is attaining popularity and prominence in Puduchērry. The legendary stories of the Siddhas also reveal the continuity of the Siddha tradition in Puduchērry. It is well known that the Buddha himself wrote nothing. Spiritual influence and personal example apart, his teaching was communicated entirely by oral means, through discourses to, and discussions

⁴⁵⁸ A book is also published regarding her spiritual experiences, teachings, ideas of Māthāji by Swāmi Ōṅāra Nanda, *Irubathām Nūtrāṇḍin Iṟuthi Siddhar* (Tamil), Ōṅgāram Publications, Puduchērry, 1998

⁴⁵⁹ Interview with Radhakrishnan (68) devotee, Tattāñchāvady, 16.10.2010; Mohanambal (57) devotee, Karuvadikuppam, 18.10.2010; and Gopalakrishnan, (62) N. R. Congress, Gorimedu 7.7.2011; C.S.Murugesan, *Op.cit.*, 2007, pp. 170-177.

with, his disciples and members of the public, as well as through inspired spontaneous utterance⁴⁶⁰. Similarly the Siddhas of Puduchērry region as well as in parts of Tamiḷnādu, from the past century, wrote nothing about their cult or philosophy, but it is their followers who made those siddhas popular and placed them in a divine status among the other popular Siddhas of the Tamiḷnādu, popularly known as *Pathinēn-siddhars* or the eighteen Siddhas.

Kuṇḍalini Māmuṇivar

Kuṇḍalini Māmuṇi is believed to be a great Siddha. The locals accept that he is a Siddha who spent most of his life in the Tiruvakkarai temple and sang in its praise⁴⁶¹. He breathed his last in that temple and a *Samādhi* was built over his mortal remains within the temple premises. The *Sthalapurāṇa* states that Vakkarāsūra, a demon who belongs to the tradition of Kuṇḍalini Muṇivar ruled this place⁴⁶². The original name of this Siddha or the period of his existence is unknown⁴⁶³. However, the term ‘*Kuṇḍalini*’ represents one of the popular *yōgic* practices which have been often practiced by the Siddhas. By practicing the *Kuṇḍalini yōga*, this Siddha might have got this name.

The Sūfi Siddhas

Sūfism claims to be the highest expression of Islamic ideals and principles. According to its followers, surrendering to God means absorption into God himself. Sūfīs developed a variety of techniques to assist the dedicated practitioner on the way to mystical experience⁴⁶⁴. *Wahdatu’l Wujūd* (Unity of being or Oneness of Existence) emerged as the most important Sūfī principle through the works of a Sūfī scholar Ibn ‘Arabi (1165-1240). He emphasized that as transcendence and immanence are two

⁴⁶⁰ A.L. Basham, *A Cultural History of India*, OUP, Delhi, 1975, p. 88

⁴⁶¹ However, none of his songs are available or popularly spread over in this area.

⁴⁶² Different types of legends are there regarding this Siddha. Traditions say that, he was the grandfather of the Vakkarāsūran. See C. S. Murugesan, *Pugaḷ Mikka Kāli Tirukkoilgaḷ* (Tamiḷ), Sankar Pathipagam, Chennai, 2010, p.89

⁴⁶³ In fact the original names of many popular siddhas are still not known to anybody. Most of these Siddhas were given with Pseudo names by the respective scholars who worked on those Siddha literatures. For instance, the name of the Siddhars like Pāmbāṭṭi, Agapēy, Kudambai are not their original names. These are names given to them by the refrains which they often use in their songs.

⁴⁶⁴ Joseph Stoutzenberger, *The Human Quest for God: An overview of World Religions*, Twenty Third Publications, New London, 2006, p.135

fundamental aspects of Reality, God is both Transcendent and Immanent. ‘He is absolute Being, and is the sole source of all existence; in Him alone Being and Existence are one and inseparable’. There is no such thing as union with God in the sense of becoming one with God, but there is the realization of the already existing fact that the mystic is one with God’. This philosophy was very compatible with the theistic philosophy of Gōrakṣnāth and his followers⁴⁶⁵. There are many Sūfī saints in and around Puduchērry, who were worshipped as Siddhas and got elevated to the status of demi-gods. Some of them are preserved in the oral tradition and local literary compositions. What is significant about these Sūfī saints is that the command respect and devotion from a cross section of the society without any distinction of caste, creed, faith, gender and economic status.

Pīr Muhammad

Pīr Muhammad was a Sūfī saint born at Tenkāsi (Tirunelvēli District), meditated at Pīrmēdu (Kēraḷā State) and spent his last days at Takkalai (Kaṇṇiyākumari District), where his tomb is visited by Hindus and Muslims on all Sundays and Thursdays, especially in night. He was a mystic poet belonging to the Quateriya order⁴⁶⁶ of the Sūfis, and has sung nearly 18,000 verses in Tamiḷ on mysticism. His *Jñāna Rattiṇa kuṟavaṇṇi* is included as the 11th book in the *Jñānakkōvai*. In this he speaks of *Om*, Śiva and the *Kuṇḍalini yōga*. His *Jñānamaṇimālai* – 242 is an exposition of Sūfism in Tamiḷ. His works reconcile Siddha cult and Sūfism⁴⁶⁷. His other poetic works are *Jñāṇa Puḡaḷchi*, *Jñāṇa Kuṟaḷ* and *Jñāṇa Pāṭṭu*. His verses resemble both in substance and structure the Siddha poems⁴⁶⁸.

⁴⁶⁵ On an intellectual level, Sūfis were influenced by a *haṭha-yōgic* treatise entitled *Amṛta Kuṇḍa*. It was translated several times into Arabic and Persian, and taught the Sūfis their meditative practices, as well as imparting information about herbs and chemistry. Various anecdotes indicate that Sūfis approved of some ethical values of the *Yōgis* as well as of their corporate way of living. See A.L. Basham, *Op.cit.*, pp.286-287

⁴⁶⁶ This order was founded by Mohiuddin Abdul Quadir Jalani (1077-1166). For more details see R.Venkataraman, *Op.cit.*, p. 173

⁴⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 173. But there prevails a controversy regarding the birth place and period of Pīr Muhamad. Venkataraman dates him to 17th century and S. N. Kandasamy dated him to 19th century. For further details see also S.N. Kandaswamy, *Op.cit.*, p. 68

⁴⁶⁸ S.N. Kandaswamy, *Op.cit.*, p. 68

Guṇaṅguḍi Mastān (1788-1835 C.E.)

Guṇaṅguḍi Mastān was one of the celebrated Sūfi Siddhas of 18th - 19th centuries. He was named after his village Guṇaṅguḍi of Rāmnād District. He was born in 1788 as the son of Sheik Mirān. His real name was Sultān Abdul Quādir Labbai Ālim, later popularly known as Guṇaṅguḍi Mastān. From his boyhood days he continued to live the life of an ascetic. He roamed in the hills and forests of Saduragiri, Puṛāmalai, Nāgamalai, etc., and spent his whole time in isolation. He perfected himself in *yōgic* meditation. He was initiated into the Sūfi mysticism by Sham Sāhib of Trichy. After his initiation he went to Sikandarmalai (Tirupparaṅkunram), and practiced *Yōga* very severely. He had. He too belonged to the Quateriya order of the Sūfis and has written more than 1,000 verses in Tamil, longing for the grace of Muhammad as his *Guru*. He gained many disciples both from the Hindus and the Muslim who were largely attracted by his songs and teachings. He was well versed in the Islamic theology and the spiritual and devotional writings of Hindus in Tamil. It is essential to note that Guṇaṅgudi Mastān was greatly influenced by the poems of Tāyumāṇavar. In his songs one can notice the imitations of the writings of Tāyumāṇavar. Besides, terms, forms and thoughts of the Tamil Siddhas are also reflecting in the songs of Mastān Sāhib⁴⁶⁹. For instance, Mastān Sāhib in his *Manōnmaṇikkaṇṇi* denotes the Supreme Being of the Sūfis by using the terms peculiar to the Tamil Siddhas, such as Umaiyaḷ, Nandi, Vālai, Manōnmaṇi, etc. Basically he was a Sūfi Siddha. In his *Agattiar Satakam* he invokes the blessings of Mohiruddin (the founder of the Quateriya order of Sūfism) and requires for a union with his 'Beloved' (the Supreme Being) through *Yōgic samādhi*⁴⁷⁰. Mastān like the other Siddhas performed many miracles. All his poems are published in an anthology with the title *Guṇaṅgudi Mastān Pādalgaḷ* or *Guṇaṅgudiyār Pādal Kōvai*. The tone and texture of his poems are very close to those of the poems of the Siddha⁴⁷¹.

⁴⁶⁹ M. Arunachalam, *Op.cit.*, p. 282

⁴⁷⁰ R. Venkataraman, *Op.cit.*, pp. 173-74

⁴⁷¹ S.N. Kandaswamy, *Op.cit.*, p.68

Meyvalisālai Āṇḍavar (1890-1976 C.E.)

Meyvalisālai Āṇḍavar is one of the modern Sūfi Siddhas. His original name was ‘Kādar Bāsha’. He was born in 1890 and died at the age of 86. This Sūfi Siddha said that he belongs to the tradition of Siddhas beginning from Macchamuni. Initially he was served as a police constable, but resigned his job and got initiated by one Taṇigaimaṇippiran into the mystic cult. He set up a *āśram* near Pudukkōtṭṭai and had thousands of followers. He expressed his views in speeches and only a few of them are published and circulated among the initiated. This Sūfi Siddha did not yearn for God, but he attempted to attain the superior occult powers by which he wants to become the ‘Supreme dispenser of the judgement day’. While he was speaking about himself, he always addressed as first person plural. He claimed himself as a God and wanted his followers to believe that he was the only true God and his abode was the true temple. During his lifetime he claimed to have established one family of mankind and shown to the world that God is one, which he himself is. But finally he was died in 1976⁴⁷².

Śri Moulā Sāhib (18th Century)

Moulā Sāhib was born in a rich trader’s family of Veḷḷala community in Arcot, Tamiḷnādu. He never cared about or respected money and wandered according to his will. One day he saw one Muslim ‘*pakkiri*’ (*Fakir*) and was inspired by his speech and appearance, then started following him up to Mecca. After returning from Mecca, Moulā Sāhib totally changed as a Muslim both in appearance and thought. He came to Puducherry and stayed at Lāl Bhahadūr Sāstry Street for a long time and propagated his divine ideals, and disappeared from that place suddenly. After few months a coffin was seen floating in the sea near Puducherry. The Muslim leaders suspected that the coffin may be one of their elder’s. Therefore it was buried just opposite of present Local Administrative Department, near Seventh Day Church (Victor Simoneal St.). When Puducherry became a French Colony and their population increased in the town, the Muslims were driven to the Black town from there. Thus the *Samādhi* which was located nearer to G.H. in white town was left uncared without any worship or maintenance and finally got dilapidated.

⁴⁷² R.Venkataraman, *Op.cit.*, pp. 174-75

It is said that Moulā Sāhib one day appeared in the dream of the *Kājiyār* (head of the Mosque) and village headman and informed them, that he was buried in that *Samādhi*. Then onwards, *Kājiyār* started worshiping it, even he was teased by the public.

Since it is located in the Christian dominated area, some of them complained to the French government. The French Government requested *Kājiyār* to abandon his worship. Therefore he appealed to the Puducherry Governor Francōis Mārtin (1699-1706) to relocate the the *Samādhi*. As a result, on one Friday, the Muslim devotees and French officials gathered before Moulā Sāhib's *Samādhi*. They dug the place and took the coffin in a procession to the present Mullā Street of Puducherry and buried it. When they opened the coffin, they noticed that the body was kept with Muslims' custom of burial and remained without any decay, even after several years. Presently a *Darga* and next to it a mosque was built near the *samādhi*. Every Thursday and Friday, people are coming and worshiping here. Some elders believe that even today, Sāhib will be wandering here⁴⁷³. Now Moulā Sāhib considered as one of the 'Auliyas'. A poem was written near the *samādhi* "*Al Arbu Rappāni Valla Raj Jul Hara maini va Sāhib Suba naini Syed Ahmad Moulā Sāhib (Katha Salla hi)*", which means 'In the centre of the coconut grove under its shadow, the God's palace, is taking rest').

Mahān Badē Sāhib

The *samādhi* shrine of Mahān Badē Sāhib, a Sūfī saint, at Chinṇabābusamudram is getting famous day by day. During his early days, he stayed in Tirukkanūr and cured various diseases of the surrounding people. Then he migrated to Chinṇabābusamudram located some twenty kilometers west of Puducherry, and stayed near a pond. It is said, though a Muslim, he renovated the Śiva temple, which is found adjacent to his *Samādhi*. There, he often played with local children. He asks them to dig a pit and close him in it. After few minutes, he came out of it. Likewise, at the time of *samādhi*, he offered sweets to the children and asked them to close him in the pit. But he never came out of it. He attained his *samādhi* on 12.02.1868. Since then, every year on this day *gurupūjā* is being conducted regularly. A perpetual lamp

⁴⁷³ C.S.Murugesan, *Puducherry Siddhargal*, (Tamil), pp. 191-196.

is placed in his *samādhi*. At present thousands of people gathering for worshipping him daily.

The Doctrine of *Bhakti* and the modern Siddha Cult

Starting from the medieval period, *Bhakti* played an important role in various phases. Very often Asceticism and *tridaṇḍi* (triple staff) ascetics were honoured by the Hindu devotees. The Ālvārs, Nāyaṇmārs, and to some extent the Tamil Siddhas like Paṭṭiṇattār, Tāyumaṇavar, etc. have made significant contributions to the development of *Bhakti* and to the formation of its present doctrine. *Bhakti* is an emotional attachment towards a personal god with simple disposition. One can practice it without any discrimination of caste, creed, or gender. Today following the footsteps of realized souls like Siddhas, is considered as a best way to develop one's *Bhakti* than performing the *Jñānayōga* and the *Karmayōga*⁴⁷⁴.

In the Peninsular region, the Siddha movement transcended its religious confines and established itself as a powerful platform for a new socio-cultural dispensation. The Nātha-Siddha movement which openly challenged the caste system and supremacy of the Brahmins had gained popularity among the masses. Besides, the amalgamation of the *Bhakti* thought with Sūfī philosophy, and its liberal and emancipatory ideas influenced *Bhakti* doctrine in great measure. Some of the typical Muslim concepts like equality and brotherhood were further resonated and revitalized the social vision of the Siddha movement⁴⁷⁵.

From the 9th century C.E., the Kālāmukha-Pāśupata sects became an integral and powerful part of Śaiva religion through the *matha* organization. They are believed to be anti-*Vēdic* and anti-caste in origin⁴⁷⁶. Vīra-Śaivism, a reformist division of the Kālāmukha sect originated both as a counter to Jain ascendancy and as an anti-caste movement in Karnāṭaka was also influenced by *Tamil Śaiva bhakti*⁴⁷⁷. Although the

⁴⁷⁴ N. K. Sundareswaran, 'The Concept of Bhakti in Naradhabhaktisutra and Sandilyabhaktisutra', in *Journal of Sukrtindra Oriental Research Institute*, Kerala, October 2013, Vol.15, No.1, pp. 4-5

⁴⁷⁵ Braj Ranjan Mani, *Op.cit.*, p. 143.

⁴⁷⁶ Romila Thapar, 'Renunciation: The Making of a Counter Culture', in *Ancient Indian Social History: Some Interpretations*, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1978, p.75; David N. Lorenzen, *The Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas: Op.cit.*, pp. 148-9

⁴⁷⁷ See A.K. Ramanujan, *Speaking of Siva*, Baltimore, 1973. See C.N. Venugopal, 'Lingayat Ideology of Salvation: An Inquiry into some of its Social Dimensions', *Religion and Society*, Vol. XXIX, No. 4,

Tamil Siddha School represents an important and interesting offshoot of the pan-Indian *tāntric-yōga* movement, it prominently depict features such as anti-Brāhmanism and even anti-ritualism⁴⁷⁸.

Tirumūlar, one of the canonized *bhakti* saints, was the greatest of the Tamil Siddhas, who laid emphasis on the Śiva and Murugaṇ worship. His analogy of the human body and the temple of god, and the idea of the body as a fit instrument for the soul in pursuit of self-discipline and quest for god, provided a convenient alternative to the icon in the temple. His canonization took place in the 12th century as a part of the attempts to resolve the societal and ideological crisis of the times which were due to the claims for greater non-Brahmana participation in temple ritual and temple administration.

As mentioned earlier, the growth of *tāntrism* in north and the growth of *bhakti* movement in south were enrolled irrespective of caste. The *bhakti* movement was led by a series of popular Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava saints called Nāyaṇmārs and Ālvārs respectively. These saints rejected austerities and looked upon religion as a living bond based on love between the god and the worshipper, instead of a formal worship. The chief objects of their worship were Śiva and Viṣṇu. Almost all of them disregarded the inequalities of caste, though they did not try to oppose the caste system as such. Thus, the revival and expansion of Hinduism took two forms viz., a renewed emphasis on the *Vēdas* and *Vēdic* worship, accompanied by a powerful literary and intellectual movement; and a popular movement based on *tantra* in north and on *bhakti* in south⁴⁷⁹.

***Samādhi* Worship**

Samādhi is a state of being in which all action of awareness is abolished and there is no consciousness at all except the pure supra-mind immersion in immobile,

December 1982; K. Ishwaran, *Religion and Society Among the Lingayats of South India*. New Delhi, 1982; see also David N. Lorenzen, 'The Kalamukha Background to Vira Saivism' in S.K. Maity et.al. (eds), *Studies in Orientology*, Agra, 1988, pp.278-93; R. Champakalakshmi, 'From Devotion and Dissent to Dominance: The Bhakti of the Tamil Ālvārs and Nāyaṇārs', in David N. Lorenzen (ed.), *Religious Movements in South Asia: 600-1800*, OUP, Delhi, 2004, pp.70-71

⁴⁷⁸ Kamil V. Zvelebil, *The Poets*; see also David Shulman (eds), *Orthodoxy, Hetrodoxy and Dissent in India*, Berlin: Mouton, 1984, pp. 32-36

⁴⁷⁹ Satish Chandra, *A History of Medieval India*, Orient Black Swan, New Delhi, 2007, p. 54-55

timeless and infinite being⁴⁸⁰. *Samādhi* worship is now becoming more popular all over the country. There exist thousands of such cemeteries of great Saints and Siddhas, which are considered to be important places of worship, which provide spiritual strength and power to the devotees. (See Appendix 3) Therefore, people nowadays started worshipping the cemeteries of the great Siddhars who attained their final liberation. Among all other *Siddha Kṣētras* of the country, the *Samādhi* worship attained more popularity in Puduchērry when the *Samādhi* of Śrī Aurobindo and Śrī An̄nai came into existence. The *Āśram* attracted more devotees, since the *Yōga* of Aurobindo was meant for the transformation of the world. Religion or caste, race or nationality was no bar for being admitted into the *Āśram*. Life in the *Āśram* is marked by an inner discipline. The *Sādhana* is based on the *sādhak* aspiring for a higher consciousness, his surrender to the Divine and a constant effort at rejecting all falsehood from his actions and thoughts. Unlike other Siddhars, Aurobindo did not perform any magic or miracles but he advocated the path of *Yōga* for salvation and meditation for mental peace. This attracted more number of devotees from all over the world. Aurobindo attained his *Samādhi* on December 5, 1950. The Mother left her body on November 17, 1973. Śrī Aurobindo's *Samādhi* had an upper chamber where her body was placed on the 20th November. Then after, the *Āśramites* started to meditate in the courtyard around the *Samādhi* of Aurobindo and the Mother. Collective meditations take place twice every week in the evenings of Sundays and Thursdays⁴⁸¹.

The *Samādhi* of Sāmy Siddhānanda is located at Karuvadikuppam (in front of the Fathima Hr.Sec.School). He is considered as the most celebrated Siddhar in Puduchērry. Most of the Siddhars who belongs to Puduchērry region are said to be the followers of the Siddhānanda and worshipped his *Samādhi*. Every year on the Tamil month of Vaikāsi 15th, the *Gurupūjā* is celebrated in this *Samādhi* shrine with pomp and glory. Next to the *Samādhi* of Siddhānanda Sāmy, one can witness hundreds of devotees in the temple of a Sūfī saint Mahān Badē Sāhib at Chin̄nabābusamudram.

⁴⁸⁰ V.V. Rampal, *Belief, Reality and Religious Practice*, Nag Publishers, Delhi, 2007, p. 165

⁴⁸¹ The descending triangle represents the aspiring answer from matter under the form of life, light and love. The descending triangle represents *Sat-Chit-Ānanda* (Existence-Consciousness-Bliss). The junction of two-the central square is the perfect manifestation having at its centre the *Avatar* of the Supreme-the lotus. The water inside the square represents the multiplicity, the creation. See Francis Cyril Antony, *Gazetteer of India, union Territory of Pondicherry*, 1986, pp. 1600-1604.

Tuesday is considered to be an auspicious day in this temple. He used to stay under the *Magilam* tree, where the present temple is constructed in an octagonal shape. He attained his *Samādhi* on February 12, 1868. Therefore, every year on the Tamil month of Māsi, the *Gurupūjā* is celebrated in this temple in a very grand manner⁴⁸².

Like Badē Sāhib there is another *Samādhi* of a Sūfī saint known as Moulā Sāhib in Mullā Street of Puducherry town. On that *Samādhi*, one *Darga* and next to it a mosque was built. At present, people often visit this mosque and worshipping it regularly on every Thursday and Friday. After *Bakrid* festival, ten day festival is celebrated here. On the last day ‘Sandal Decoration’ (*Sandana Kūdu*) is celebrated⁴⁸³.

The *Samādhi* of Aḷagappa Siddhar is found near Aiyānār temple in Thennampākkam, a remote village located around 30 km to west of Puducherry. *Gurupūjā* is celebrated in this cemetery every year, on the first Monday of the Tamil month Cittirai (April-May), the day on which the Siddhar attained his *Samādhi*. At present this temple is popularly known as Aḷagar Temple. There is a tradition prevailing in this temple, that if one wants to get a male child, they have to offer a small statue of a boy to this Siddhar. Then they will surely get a male issue. Similarly one who wishes for a female child, they have to offer a female statue. If their children are not reading well, they have to offer a statue of their children like reading with books, if they are handicapped with parts of their body; they have to offer the image of that part. In this way, one can witness thousands of concrete images of boys and girls around the *Samādhi* of the Aḷagappa Siddhar.

Kathirvēl Sāmy was said to be a native of Śrīlaṅka. He shifted his hut in the Kandankudi of Brindhāvaṇam area and attained his *Samādhi* there. The present ‘Sithankudi’ area where his cemetery is located is only named after the Kathirvēl Sāmīgal. The *Samādhi* shrine (*Siddhar Pītam*) of Śrī Akkā Paradēsi Sāmy is located at Vaithikuppam, a village situated on the north east of Puducherry town. He attained his *Samādhi* in June, 1872. His 141st *Gurupūjā* festival was conducted recently on the last week of June 2012. Along with him, his disciple Nārāyaṇa Paradēsi’s *Samādhi* is also found in the same premises and his 141st *Gurupūjā* was conducted on December 2012.

⁴⁸² Pamphlet (like *Sthalapurāṇa*) issued in the temple of Mahān Badē Sāhib.

⁴⁸³ C.S.Murugesan, *Op.cit.*, pp. 191-196

The *Samādhi* (*Siddhar Pītam*) of Śrī Śaktivēl Paramāṇanda Sāmy is found in the old Puduchērry-Cuddalore road, near the railway gate of Kāramaṇikupam. Few years back, a big shrine was built on the *Samādhi* of this Siddhar. He attained his *Samādhi* on 23rd of Tamil month Ādi. A *Samādhi* was constructed in that place. But for a long time, it was left without care. Then by the efforts of the workers of AFT mill, *Gurupūjā* was conducted from 1998 onwards. At present one can witness a red coloured big shrine near the railway gate⁴⁸⁴. The *Samādhi* of Śrī Thēnkāi Sāmy is situated at Tattāñchāvady, near electricity sub-station of Villianūr. It is structured like a small temple iron sheet in which a *līṅga* is installed in it. Few years back the damaged hut was renovated with Iron sheets (as it looks today) and made it as a place of worship. Now *Gurupūjā* was celebrated every year⁴⁸⁵.

Peculiar names of the Siddhas

Many of the Tamil Siddhas are known popularly by their personal names and some other derived names like Gaṇapathi Dāsar, Sūryāṇandar, Pūraṇāṇandar etc. Some of them concealed themselves in a different type of pseudo names such as Puṇṇākkīsar, Kāgapuṇḍar, Pūnai Kaṇṇar, Appā Paithiyam Sāmigaḷ and Thoḷḷaikādu sāmīyar. Similarly some of the names of the Siddhas were taken up from the phrases or refrains which they frequently used in their songs. For instance, the names like Agappēy Siddhar, Kudambai Siddhar, Śivavākkiyar, Pāmbāṭṭi Siddhar and Akkā Paradēsi Swāmigaḷ are picked up from the phrases which they often employed in their songs or the words often used by them. Pāmbāṭṭi, Ahappēy and Kudambai Siddhars derive their names by using *āḍu Pāmbē*, *ahappēy* and *kudambāi* respectively as refrains in all their stanzas. Aḷukaṇi Siddha may have been named by the scholars due to the wailing quality of the metre employed by him. Iḍaikkāḍar's songs are designed as dialogues between two shepherds and Kaḍuveḷi Siddha probably by using the term *veṭṭaveḷi* as a symbol of the ultimate. Some of the names of the Siddhas differ from the usual Tamil names and they are considered as foreigners or were connected with foreign countries in many ways, as they visited such country, or did their penance there, or went of collecting the medicinal herbs, to teach the *yōgic* practices etc.

⁴⁸⁴ C.S.Murugesan, *Op.cit.*, pp. pp. 155-161.

⁴⁸⁵ C.S.Murugesan, *Op.cit.*, pp. pp. 88-90; interview with Mr. Arumugam, (O/M, Dept of Sociology, Pondicherry University) care taker of the *Samādhi* Shrine (09.09.2009).

Most of the Siddhas concealed their original names and assumed pseudo names or nicknames, probably to differentiate themselves from other groups of intellectuals and devotees. Best examples to these kinds of names are Vaḷḷalār, whose real name is Rāmalingam. But he got this name because of his philanthropic character. Another of this kind is Avvaiyār, a well-known female Siddha whose real name is un-known. But she was called so far by the people because of her appearance as an aged woman. Similarly, Siddha Bhadragiri's real name is also unknown. But the word *bhadra*, means beauty, grace, goodness, caution, safety and also an elephant; and *Giri* means mountain. Hence the name Bhadragiri may stands to show him as a strong-minded person with all spiritual values. To the same belong the names such as Saṭṭi Sāmiyar, Pavaḷakodi Sāmiyar, Maṇṇuruṭṭi Sāmiyar etc.

Likewise, some of the Siddha names are suffixed by the village names of their origin or places of residence. For example, the names like Paṭṭinattār, Iḍaikāṭṭu Siddhar, Koṅgaṇar, Karuvūrar, Kailāya Kambaḷi Saṭṭaimuṇi, Kaṇjamalai Siddhar, Kollimalai Siddhar, Poṇṇimalai Siddhar, Ēmbalam Appār Sāmigaḷ, Yālpānathaḍigaḷ and recently, Madurai Vālai Sāmi, Guṇaṅgudi Mastān, Tirukkāñji sāmīyar etc.,.

In Puduchērry region, some of the siddhas are called by the names of edible items such Thēṅgāi Sāmigaḷ (coconut), and Vāḷaipāḷa Sāmigaḷ (Banana). But, speaking generally, all the available lists are mixed with a lot of fictions and confusions instead of authentic historical information.

Celebrated *Siddha Kṣētras* of Tamiḷnādu

From very simply marked sacred tree, a snake hill, a smeared stone, a *samādhi* shrine, a picture of a favored deity, to enlarged temples, there are thousands of sacred centres found all over the Tamiḷnādu. Of them, the places dedicated to Siddhas and their *samādhis* attract millions of devotees. In case of Siddha *samādhis*, devotees often visit such places, circumambulate, prostrate, or in other ways do obeisance what they knew. Many of the Siddha shrines at present were maintained by a local non-brahman priest. On important events or festivals, a goat or chicken is also sacrificed to these Siddhas. Nowadays some devotees frequently started visiting these *siddha-kṣētras* with their whole family and offers special *pūjās*. In fact, many of the employees visit these shrines, particularly on Thursdays for *darśan*, and then only

they proceed to their works or working places. In many of the Siddha shrines, a congregational worship in the form of singing devotional songs and *bhajans* are also come into practice as like other Hindu temples.

Gradually many of these Siddha shrines in some places are worshipped as clan and folk deities. Then these Siddha shrines or *samādhis* become sanskritized. Some of them become more prosperous and attain more popularity and importance due to increased status in which the brahmanical mode of worship is taking place. As time passed these Siddha shrines attracted other groups of people who later choose these centres as their favourite pilgrim centres. In many of the newly established Siddha shrines, the Brahmin priests were appointed initially on hiring basis for performing *āgamic* rituals. In some centres, idols are also installed following the *āgamic* stipulations of consecration rituals. Besides, the Siddhas (if their names are not known) are named in sankritized style and integrated into the mainstream Hindu pantheon. Many of these shrines are upgraded to popular religious centres and attract the devotees in large number. Some of such *Siddha Kṣētras* are discussed below. (See Appendix 3)

Paḷaṇi Hills

Paḷaṇi Hills (10°26'N; 77°31'E) is located in the southern part of Tamiḷnāḍu. It is one of the wealthiest temple complexes in the south. Paḷaṇi has become truly popular only in recent times. It is true that a Tamiḷ text dating back to the 6th century refer to a site which this temple claims as its own, and the temple's *sthalapurāṇa* claims that medieval kings came to worship here. The site was also associated with medicinal ascetics in the medieval period. The favored deity at Paḷaṇi is Murugaṇ, Tamiḷnāḍu's favorite god. He is ensconced atop the local hill in the guise of an ascetic, there he is said to have come when angered by his parents, Śiva and Pārvathi, who had offered a fruit symbolic of their favor to Murugaṇ's elder brother Gaṇēśa. It is only after Śiva came and told Murugaṇ that he was the fruit (*Paḷam nī*), that is, the true embodiment of his father's authority and attributes, that the young god was assuaged⁴⁸⁶.

Paḷaṇi is also known as '*Sittan vāḷvu*', referred to in the earliest Tamiḷ literary sources like *Koṅgumaṇḍala Satakam*. The famous Tamiḷ poet Nacchinārkiṇiyar says

⁴⁸⁶ Fred W. Clothey, *Op.cit.*, p. 200

that ‘Sittan’ is one of the thousand names of Lord Muruga⁴⁸⁷ and here ‘Vālvu’ means abode or habitation. Since lord Muruga is residing in this hill, it is named ‘Sittan Vālvu’. The Tamil Woman Siddha poetess Avvai, a well-known devotee of Muruga says that, *Sittan Vālvu* also known as *Tiruāviṇaṇ kudi*, a place where there is a regular monsoon rains come with thunders without fail, which leads to the growth of paddy and sugarcane; in every house, the three fires (*Āgavēṇīyam*, *Kārukapatyam*, and *Dakṣiṇākkīṇēyam*), exist without any change’ is also called as *Koṇku maṇḍalam*⁴⁸⁸.

Even today Paḷaṇi is famous for its living tradition of Siddhas such as Sākkadai Sāmiyār, Alukkumūṭṭai Sāmiyār⁴⁸⁹, Puḡalēndhi Siddhar, etc. The Sākkadai Sāmiyār is presently staying at the foot of the hills of the Paḷaṇi town, on the way to the famous Taṇḍayudhapāṇi temple. Since he seated near the drainage canal and his real name and nativity is unknown, he is popularly referred by the people as Sākkadai (drainage) Sāmiyār. It is said that he is staying in the same place continuously for more than thirty years⁴⁹⁰.

Poṇṇimalai

Poṇṇimalai is located approximately five kilometres to the south of Āyakudi village of Paḷaṇi tāluk in Dindigul district of Tamiḷnādu. The hill is located exactly in the southeastern side facing the Paḷaṇi hills, which is clearly visible from Poṇṇimalai. A popular tradition prevailing among the people of Poṇṇimalai region is that Poṇṇimalai siddha, a disciple of Bōgar, pissed on the hill, and it became gold. Therefore, the hill is named as Poṇṇimalai, meaning ‘Golden Mountain’. Every year, the annual celebrations were conducted to this Poṇṇimalai Siddhar. Sometimes he is also identified with the Pulippāṇi Siddhar, as he is also a disciple of Siddha Bōgar. Earlier it is difficult to climb the hill (in 2008), which has no proper path. But after

⁴⁸⁷ T.A. Muttusamy Konar, (ed.), *Koṅgumaṇḍala Satakam*, (Tamil), Sadhu Press, Chennai, 1923, p. 84

⁴⁸⁸ *nelluṇ karumbuṇ kamugum paḷaṇṇara nēparuvach chellam parathitisaith thuppolin thōṇkidu sittanvāl, villaṇ thorūmun ṛeryidaith theṇṇa velākkalaiyum vallathaniyaḷavai kūriya thuṇ Koṇku maṇḍalamē*. See Karmega Kavingar, *Koṅgumaṇḍala Satakam*, verse 63, (Tamil), in T.A. Muttusamy Konar, (ed.) *Op.cit*, p. 83

⁴⁸⁹ A Siddha in similar name was also found in the lists of Pudukhēry Siddhas and he was referred in the songs of Subramania Bharathi.

⁴⁹⁰ Interview with Mr. Selvaraj (58), Paḷaṇi on 17.5.2013. Selvaraj came to Paḷaṇi in 1984 and engaged in the research on preparing herbal medicine. He is organizing one ‘Vadivāmbigai Trust’ and often conducts free camps on herbal medicine.

few years (2013), when the name and fame of this *Ponṇimalai* Siddhar gained popularity, with the grand donation of the devotees, a path was temporarily arranged to climb the hill. Interestingly on the top of the hill, few memorial stones and few utensils used for oblations were also found. In archeological point of view, the bricks available on the top and terracotta figures found under the foot hills seem to be more than 100 years old (Figs. 168-169)

Kaṇḍjamalai

Kaṇḍjamalai (11°37'2 N; 78°3'35 E) is located fourteen kilometres to the west of Salem in the Salem district of Tamiḷnāḍu which is famous as the abode of Kaṇḍjamalai Siddhar. The word '*kaṇḍjam*' literally denotes the gold, copper or iron. There are many legends connected with this hill and the *Koṇḍumaṇḍala Satakam* frequently describes this hill. The legend also connects it with Adiyamān, the Tamiḷ ruler who gave the *āmla* fruit to the Siddha Poetess Avvaiyar. It is also associated with the Siddhas like Tirumūlar, Kālaṅgināthar, and other Tamiḷ Siddhars. On the top of the hill a shrine known as *Siddhar Kōil* is dedicated to Kaṇḍjamalai Siddhar. Besides, there is also a Murugaṇ temple of recent origin. The famous Śiva temple known as Siddhēśvara temple is located in the foothills dedicated to Kālaṅgināthar. Local people also called this temple as '*Amāvāsai* temple' and New moon day and full moon day, receives more attention of the devotees. It is said that many Siddhas in their invisible form are wandering around these hills and guiding the devotees. The waterfalls flow as a stream from the top called '*Ponṇi Nadhi*'. Taking a dip in this water is considered as sacred and auspicious and believed to cure the skin diseases, due to the surrounding medicinal herbs.

Saduragiri

Saduragiri hill (9°40'N; 77°38'E) is situated around ten kilometres from Vathirāiruppu village near Śrivilliputūr of Virudhunagar district of Tamiḷnāḍu. The name '*Saduragiri*' is derived from the word *Chatur* – four and *giri* –hills. It also represents the hills of four *Vēdas*, four directions, etc. It is also called with several names like Brahmagiri, Indragiri, Sūryagiri, Kailāśa, Siddhagiri, Mahaliṅgagiri, Śivagiri, Udayagiri, etc. There are many legends related to Saduragiri. A *āśram* of

Athri *Mahariṣi* and his wife Anusya Devi is associated with Tāṇippārai in local legends. It is popularly believed as an abode of the Siddhas.

The foothill of Saduragiri is known as Tāṇipārai (9°42'N; 77°37'E). From Tāṇipārai to Saduragiri hilltop is around seven kilometres, and normally it will take nearly four to five hours to reach the hilltop. It falls under the range of Western Ghats. Many popular Siddhar like Agastya, Bōgar, Pāmbāṭṭi, Gōrakṣa, Saṭṭaimuṇi, Rōmariṣi, etc. and their legends are associated with this hill. From the foothill to the top one has to cross many small shrines dedicated to Lord Gaṇēśa, Rājakāli Amman, Pēcchi Amman, Karuppusāmy, Gōrakṣa cave, *Iraṭṭai Liṅgam* (double *liṅgam*) or Saṅkaran-Nārāyaṇan *liṅgams*, Vana Durga, Sundara Mahāliṅgam and Santana Mahāliṅgam temples. At Santana Mahāliṅgam shrine, separate shrines dedicated to 'Eighteen Siddhars', lord Gaṇēśa, Murugaṇ, *Navagrahas*, Santana Mahādēvi and Āṇandavallī Amman *Maṇḍapa* are existing. Daily *Pūjās* are conducted regularly to these shrines. Besides, on full moon day and new moon day, special *pūjas* are also conducted. To the devotees, who visit this pilgrim centre, free rice gruel (*kaṇji*) is offered by 'Saduragiri *Kaṇjimadam*' organized by Śri Kālimuthu Sāmigal trust, established by one Bhadrakāli Amman in 1972. Besides, free food offerings were also made by the volunteers and devotees on special days. At present, in addition to the above, there is one Agastya Aṇṇadāna Trust and one Śiva Saṅgu Ayya Aṇṇadāna trust are providing free food to the devotees. Devotees firmly believe that there are many siddhars living in this hill. Famous among them are Talai Āṭṭi Siddhar of Perumbālūr, Kālidās Siddhar of Paḷaṇi and the above mentioned Kālimuthu Sāmigal, who attained *samādhi* in 2004 and his *samādhi* is found at his *āśram* in S. Ramachandrapuram, located fifteen kilometres from Śrivilliputhūr⁴⁹¹.

Maruthamalai (Fig. 167)

Maruthamalai (11°2'N; 76°52'E) Is located 13 km to the west of Coimbatore town. It is famous for its Murugaṇ temple, located on the hilltop. Since it is covered by 'Marutham' trees, it got the name, Maruthamalai, the hill of *Marutham*. It is also

⁴⁹¹ There are many books and guides are available about the Saduragiri hills. But, all of them serving merely as a tourist information guide consist of attractive legends and no historical information found in it. Only a few related books are included in the bibliography, found at the end of this work. The information given above regarding individual siddha kṣētras are all based on the information gathered from the field work conducted by the researcher.

considered as the seventh abode of Lord Murugaṇ. The temple is also famous for the Pāmbāṭṭi Siddhar cave, located on the slope in the eastern side of the Murugaṇ temple. Now parapets are constructed for the protection of the pilgrims who visit there. It is said that, Pāmbāṭṭi Siddhar did penance in this cave and attained *aṣṭasiddhis*⁴⁹². The entrance and meditation *maṇḍapa* of the Pāmbāṭṭi siddhar cave as well as the entrance *Rājagōpura* of the Murugaṇ temple were built by Mr. M.A.Chinnappa Tēvar of Coimbatore, a famous film producer who also produced many devotional movies in Tamil, and considerably propagated the fame of Maruthamalai through his films all over Tamilnādu. He also provided electric lighting all along the steps leading to hilltop from the foothill, and in 1963, he constructed a road from foothill to the hilltop to run the buses⁴⁹³.

Important days like *Thai Pūsam*, *Kiruthikai* star, temple car (Tēr) festival during the Tamil month of Vaikāsi (May-June), *Ādi perukku* on Ādi eighteenth, *Navarātri* festival, *Kārthikai Dīpam*, *Mārgaḷi* festivals are celebrated in this temple in a grand manner. All the festivals and *pūjās* are conducted to Lord Murugaṇ only; the cave of Pāmbāṭṭi Siddhar gets only a little importance in this regard. People believe that, if one who visits this cave, need not worry about the poisonous snake bites; their skin diseases will be cured, they will attain more knowledge and intellectual powers, peaceful mind and thought etc.

Veḷḷiaṅgiri

Veḷḷiaṅgiri (10°59'N; 76°41'E) also known as '*Dakṣiṇa Kailāśa*' or '*Then Kailāyam*' is located around forty kilometres from Coimbatore town, formerly known as 'Koṅkumaṇḍalam'⁴⁹⁴. At the foot of the hill, a village named Pūṇḍi and recently established Dhyānalinga Meditation centre are situated. Both these centres have a high spiritual ambience. It is believed that countless Siddhas have their abode here and many of the ascetics are performing their penance here. The chief deity of Veḷḷiaṅgiri is known as Veḷḷiaṅgiri Āṇḍavar and his consort is Maṇōnmaṇi Amman.

⁴⁹² But, it is also believed that he attained *Samādhi* at Saṅkarankoil of Tamilnādu. The hills like Saduragiri, Kollimalai, Bhavāni in Erode, Puliyūr and Madurai are also connected with this Siddhar. However, at Marudhamalai only he got attained the power of *aṣṭasiddhis* through his penance.

⁴⁹³ P.S. Manian, *Kovai Maruthamalai Murugaṇ Magimaiyum Varāḷarum*, Vijaya Pathipakam, Coimbatore, 2011, p. 40.

⁴⁹⁴ But no references found about Veḷḷiaṅgiri in *Koṅkumaṇḍala Satakam*.

The temple is situated at the foothill of Pūṇḍi, the peaceful place from where one has to start climbing the hill. One has to trek around 6 km to reach the summit of Veḷḷiaṅgiri, which has an altitude of 6000 feet. People believe that the hill is sanctified and surrounded by abodes of the great siddhas like Aḷukku Siddhar, Paḷaṇi Sāmīgal, Soundarapāṇḍi Siddhar, Kālathri Siddhar, Eṭṭikoṭṭa Siddhar, Miḷagāi Sāmiyar, Mysore Sāmiyar and so on. There are seven hills in Veḷḷiaṅgiri to represent the seven *cakras*⁴⁹⁵. In the first hill, the shrine of Veḷḷi Viṇāyakar; in the second hill - *Pāmbāṭṭi Sunai* (water fountain), in the third hill - *Kaitaṭṭi Sunai*; in the fourth hill Siddhar Ottar's *samādhi*; in the fifth hill *Bhīma Kaliyuruṇḍai* hill, also called as 'Tirunīru malai (sacred ash hill); the sixth hill - *Sethilai* cave and *Āṇḍi Sunai*; and finally in the seventh hill, the Lord of Veḷḷiaṅgiri, in a self-emanated phallic form (*suyambu liṅgam*) is found. Interestingly, at the entrance of the cave in the seventh hill, two natural stones are found on either side, representing the *dwārapālakas*. Mostly devotees come and worship the god in the Pūṇḍi (foothill) Śiva temple. During the full moon day, devotees rush here to climb the hilltop. Tamil New Year, Telugu New Year, *Cittirā Pournami* and *Kārthikai Dīpam* are some of the festivals celebrated here every year. Many ascetics are living in a tiled house is provided to them for performing their daily rituals at the foot of the hill. Daily afternoon, they decorate a palanquin and blow the conch and beat the drum like a funeral procession from their abode to the Śiva temple as a part of their ritual. The government of Tamilnādu is providing them lunch in the afternoon. At the foothills of Veḷḷiaṅgiri, a newly established meditation centre known as Dhyānaliṅga is located. It was consecrated by Sadguru Jaggi Vāsudēv. He is considered as a great *guru*, mystic and master *yōgi* by the devotees. The size of the Dhyānaliṅga is about 13.9 feet high. Devotees are allowed here free of cost to sit and meditate peacefully to experience the vibrations found inside the meditation centre.

Kaṇṇivādi

Kaṇṇivādi (10°22'N; 77°49'E) is located twenty-two kilometers from Dindigul, on the Paḷaṇi-Dindigul-Madurai highway. It is said that Bōgar did his penance here, before making the '*navapāṣaṇa*' idol of Paḷaṇi Āṇḍavar. Nearer to this,

⁴⁹⁵ Besides, the 6 km of trekking and 6000 feet are also the symbolical representation of the six *cakras* and one has to cross these six to reach the hilltop or the seventh *cakra* '*Sahasrāra*'.

there is one Rājakāli Amman temple in which a separate sanctum is dedicated to Bōgar. The Siddhar festival is celebrated on eighteenth day of the Tamil month of Ādi (August). Towards the west of the village about five kilometres away, one can reach a hill which is celebrated as an abode of Siddhas. Apart from few natural caves, there is a cave in triangular shape in which it is said that the Siddhas like Meikaṇḍār, Bōgar and others did their penance and also engaged in the preparation of herbal tinctures. Devotees from various places frequently visit this *samādhi* shrine. Annual festivals and the birth anniversary of the siddhas are also celebrated here.

Kollimalai

Kollimalai or the Kolli hills (11°14'N; 78°20'E) is located in the Salem district of Tamilnādu. It is famous, because of the Siddhars who stayed there are popularly known as Kollimalai Siddhars⁴⁹⁶. The Arappālīśvara temple is situated on the top of the Kolli Hills, dedicated to Lord Śiva and Goddess Tāyāmbal. It is an ancient temple, sung by the *Tēvāram* Saints. The Kolli hill itself is famous for a beautiful sculpture of *Pāvai*, often referred to in early *San̄gam* literature as *Kollippāvai*. A sculpture is now identified as *Kollippāvai* but it seems to be an image of Kālī of the Cōlā period. From time immemorial, the Śiva temple has been held in high veneration by a Śaivite saint and his followers and is one of the foremost sacred *sthalas* in the *Koṅgu* country. The present structure goes back to the period of the early Cōlās⁴⁹⁷. It is seen from the temple records that the temple continued to occupy a very important role on the top of the hill right through the centuries till very recent times. The Kolli hills are also known for medicinal herbs grown in plenty which are used both by *āyūrvēdic* and Siddha medical practitioners. According to the *sthalapurāṇa* the Kolli hills were inhabited by saints and sages in ancient times, particularly by Siddhas. Archaeological evidences point to the existence of Jaina

⁴⁹⁶ To reach this hill, one has to come from Salem-Rāsipuram route and climb up for about 5 kilometers from the Puḷiyañchōlai village.

⁴⁹⁷ Number of inscriptions found on the walls of the temple records dedications to Lord Śiva and his consort during the reigns of Uttama Cōlā (late 10th century C.E.), Rājarāja I, Rājādhirāja, Rājamahēndra and Kulottuṅga Cōlā. One of the donors is the famous Cōlā queen Sembiyanmahādēvi, the queen of Gandaraditya, the mother of Uttama Cōlā. The Kolli hills is also the residing place of a tribe called Malaiyāla Goundar. R.Nagasamy, *Art and Culture of Tamilnadu*, Sundeeprakashan, Delhi, 1980, pp. 92-94

followers in various parts of the hills. The Kolli hills consist of a row of tall hills with a central valley and are often called as Sathuragiri⁴⁹⁸.

Kāñcipuram

Kāñcipuram (12°50'N; 79°42'E) of Tamiḷnādu was once famous for its Buddhist Siddhāchāryās. It is believed that Ācāryā Nāgārjuna (500 C.E.) was initiated to mystic doctrine by one Vajra-Sattva, a resident of Kāñci. Then one Amōgha-Vajra, one of the disciples of Vajra-Bōdhi, (Bōdhi-Darma) another native of Kāñci was believed to be responsible for the introduction of *Tāntric Yōga* tradition in China and taught them esoteric philosophy⁴⁹⁹.

Mādampākkam

Mādampākkam (12°55'N; 80°7'E) is located near East Tāmbaram, a suburb of Chennai. It is famous for the recently constructed 'Eighteen' Siddhar temple. It was constructed at the instruction of Sathguru Sēśādri Sāmigal of Tiruvaṇṇāmalai. This Eighteen Siddhar temple is dedicated to Śricakra Mahāmēru, a form of Mother Goddess called Śri Lalitha Tripurasundari. Daily hundreds of devotees visit this temple in search of peace and solace. The Siddhar shrines constructed here are dedicated to Sathguru Sēśādri Sāmigal of Tiruvaṇṇāmalai and other Eighteen Siddhars like Śivavākkīyar, Kailāya Kambali Saṭṭaimuni, Bōgar, Kāgapusundar, Pulippāṇi, Agapēy, Kudambai, Saṭṭaimuni, Vaḷḷalār, Idaikātar, Paṭṭiṇatār, Kaduveli, Kañjamalai Siddhar, Chennimalai Siddhar, Kapilar, Karuvūrār and Pāmbāṭṭi Siddhar. Besides, few other shrines dedicated to popular Hindu deities like Viṣṇu, Śiva, Gaṇēśa, Murugaṇ, Ayyappan, the Śaiva saints like Appar, Sundarar, Sambandar and Māṇikkavāsagar, etc.

Vadalūr

Vadalūr (11°33'N; 79°33'E) is located ten kilometres from Neyveli town, in the Cuddalore district of Tamiḷnādu. It is famous for the Satya Jñāna Sabai established by Vaḷḷalār Rāmaliṅga. Pilgrims and tourists from many parts of the country frequently visit this place. On 23rd of May, 1867, Siddhar Rāmaliṅga established

⁴⁹⁸ R. Nagasamy, *Op.cit.*, 1980, pp. 92-94

⁴⁹⁹ Alice Getty, *The Gods of Northern Buddhism*, New Delhi, 1978, p. 31

Satya Dharmasāla, to feed the needy and poor. Since he advocated, only vegetarian food is provided to all, most of the devotees dwelling in the surrounding villages are also converted to vegetarianism. Daily morning 5 AM to evening 8.30 PM, devotees sing *Tiruvarutpā* songs, and thrice a day they sing *Arutperuñjothi Akaval* and special *pūjās* are also conducted. Thursday is considered as more auspicious and special *Bhajans* are arranged. At *Satya Jñāna Sabai*, Vadalūr, which he established on 25th January 1872, daily morning 11.30 to 12.00 AM and evening 7.30 to 8 PM, *Tiruvarutpā* is recited along with special *pūjās*⁵⁰⁰. Besides, the *Thai Pūsam* festival falls in the month January, the day, Siddha Rāmalinga presumed as light, lakhs of devotees gather here to see the *Jyōthi Darśan*.

Vadaku Poigai Nallūr

Vadaku Poigai Nallūr (12°54'N; 79°33'E) is famous for its Kōrakkar (Gōrakṣa) *samādhi* shrine. This village is located six kilometres south of Nāgapattinam town and nearer to the Bay of Bengal. From here the town of Vēlḷāṅkaṇṇi is around six kilometres. It is said that Siddha Gōrakṣa attained *samādhi* here some 300 years ago. Many monks live in the temple who go to the surrounding villages only once in day for begging food. The rural people respect these monks as Siddhars.

Tiruvāṇṇāmalai

Tiruvāṇṇāmalai (12°13'N; 79°4'E) is a well-known *siddha-kṣētra* in Tamiḷnādu, which is also known for its impressive hill and a great spiritual attraction. The Lord enshrined in the great Temple at Tiruvāṇṇāmalai is known by the name of Aruṇāchalēśvara with his consort Umā, here known as Apithakucha Nāyaki. In Tamiḷ they were popularly known as Aṇṇāmalaiyar and Uṇṇāmulai Amman. It is believed that Brahma and Viṣṇu sought the furthestmost limits of Aruṇāchala, while He stood as a huge column of fire. The failure of their efforts brought the two primal Gods to realize the truth of their own Being, and this day is celebrated as the *Mahāśivarātri*

⁵⁰⁰ Similarly, at Siddhivaḷākam in Mēṭṭukuppam village, where Vaḷḷalār attained his *siddhis*, special *pūjās* and reciting *Tiruvarutpā* is conducted from 6 AM to 8.30 PM; at Marudhūr village, (11°2'N; 79°34'E) where he was born the same worship is conducted from morning 5 AM to night 8 PM; and at Karuṅkuli near Chennai, where he stayed for nine years and lit a lamp using water, daily 5 AM to 8 PM, the above worship is conducted.

Day. It is also said that Umā, under the guidance of Rīṣi Gauthama did her penance here. During her penance she encountered and killed Mahiśāsūra. On one full moon day of *Kārthigai*, Umā went round the hill and obtained her rightful half in Śiva. To commemorate this, the *Kārthigai* festival is celebrated here.

The hill here is considered the very form of Aruṇāchala. Many have gone clockwise round the hill and obtained the great powers (*siddhis*). It is said that groups of ‘Perfected Ones’, the Siddhas, are eternally going round this hill. Therefore, every month on the full moon day, thousands of devotees gather at Tiruvaṇṇāmalai, one of the major pilgrim centres in South India, to take part in the monthly ritual conducted in the Aruṇāchalēśvara temple and also mainly to join in the *girivalam*. Devotees experience oneness with their god when they walk around the hill. On the way they worship more than hundred *līṅgams* which are different to each other in its character and divinity. They also believe that Siddhas and devotees from various parts of the World walk around the hill on that day. Coming around the hill make one to feel like they are crossing the world, the universe and passing through the clouds and constellations. Most of them feel that they got spiritual union with the god in this fifteen kilometers long *girivalam*. They also feel that circambulating this hill gives them spiritual power and relief from other tensions and sufferings. It is said that the Ramaṇa *Mahariṣi* and Siddha Sathguru *Mahariṣi* preaches devotees to walk around the hill at least once in their life. The Siddhas who dwells around this sacred hill says that going around the hill once destroys the *karma* from their rebirth.

Besides above, Tiru-Jñānasambandar and Śri Vagīsa, two of the Śaivite Saints have visited this spot and sung of Aruṇāchala and Umā; five of their Hymns on Aruṇāchala are found in the *Tēvāram*, and the world famous *Tiruvembāvai* of Māṇikavāśakar was first sung near Ādi-Aṇṇāmalai temple which located behind the hill. Besides, it was here, the great Siddha Aruṇagirināthar with his grand experience of the Self (*jñānaṇubhūti*) flourished and spread the glory of Lord Subramaṇia by his *Tiruppugal* songs. In accordance with fame of this Hill, many great souls have been drawn here and few of them are Guhanamaśivaya, Gurunamaśivaya, Isānyadēsika, Sēśādriswāmy, Yōgiram Surathkumar and most importantly Śri Ramaṇa *Mahariṣi*⁵⁰¹.

⁵⁰¹ T.K. Sundaresa Iyer, *Op.cit.*, pp.96-97

Besides them, it is believed that there are several Siddhas still living in this hill. Even today, one can frequently witness number of such ascetics roaming around Tiruvaṇṇāmalai hills, temple, and town and also around at the *Girivala* path.

Parvatha Malai

Parvatha Malai (12°26'N; 79°0'E) is located near the Kadalādi village, thirty kilometers north-west of Tiruvaṇṇāmalai, in the Tiruvaṇṇāmalai district. The hill is almost 4,000 feet in height. Though it is difficult to climb, now steps are constructed for the benefit of the pilgrims. At its very top, there is a vertical rocky cliff called *Kadappārai Malai*. As many crow bars (*Kadappārai*), are erected in this vertical hill for climbing it the hill got this name. The presiding deity of the Parvatha hills is Parvatha Rāni. She is also known as Parvathammāl and Brahmarāmbhika or Brahmarāmbha. It is not known when exactly the temple was constructed at the top of the hill. But it is sure that, since it is bearing the name of Mallikārjuna and Brahmarāmbha of the Śrisailam of Āndhra Pradesh, it is exactly the replica of the Śrisailam which also known as Śriparvata. Śrisailam is most familiar for its Siddha cult. Similarly, this Parvathamalai of Tamiḷnādu is also now attaining more popularity due to a Siddha called Swāmi Mouṇaguru.

Chettavarai

Chettavarai is a small village in Gingee Taluk in Viḷupuram district of Tamiḷnādu. It is located (12°15'N; 79°24'E) forty kilometres northwest of Viḷupuram and twenty kilometres southeast of Tiruvaṇṇāmalai⁵⁰². Chettavarai Śri Śivajōthi Mōna Siddhar is a living Siddhar, aged above 70. His origin and biographical details are not known. He came and stayed at the foot hills of Chettavarai, near Pūvāthamman temple probably in 2011 and stayed there for nearly one year. The place he stayed was already a pre-historic site popularly known as Chettavarai or Ayyanār Malai, where there found remnants of potteries and dilapidated brick structures, seems to be a habitation site. At present, it is a cultivable land in which the crops like ground nut, gingili, pulses and other cash crops are cultivated. This site is also famous for its pre-historic paintings of fish, deer, elephant, birds, bull, etc. and at the foot hills there are remnants of basement of a Śiva temple. It is said that after the arrival of this Siddha,

⁵⁰² Kīlvālai, an important rock art site of Tamiḷnādu is located 18 km south east of Chettavarai)

who stayed here for few months, reconstruction works were started in this temple and the Nandi and *Śivaliṅga* were installed, with the help of few philanthropists from Puducherry region. Then in 2012, Śrī Śivajōthi Mōṇa Siddhar was shifted to the western part of Chettavarai village, which is located in the Seṇji (Giṇji) road, some three kilometers away from the Pūvāthamman temple, where he stayed earlier. A *āśram* was established in a hut at the outset and at present (March 2014), a big temple is under construction, which is to be dedicated to lord Śiva, and a plan was made to install a *Śivaliṅga* at the height of thirty-two feet from the ground level.

The *āśram* of Śivajōthi Mōṇa Siddhar is located in the western end of the Chettavarai Village in the Seṇji-Vēṭṭavalam route with good transport facility. This *āśram* is about three acres of land in which they are maintaining a Gōśāla and also feeding the devotees and visitors. Many devotees who renounced from their worldly life joined this *āśram* and doing voluntary services. For example, an ascetic named Pugalēndhi, aged 32 is serving here as a cook. He belongs to Ooty and he had completed his Diploma in catering technology. For the last nine years he is living as an ascetic, and what dragged him to be like this is unexplainable⁵⁰³. Besides him there are some more ascetics (*aḍiyārs*) in staying in the *āśram*, and they refused to tell about them, except some usual philosophies used by all other common ascetics, and one of them was Śrirām (aged 40), an *aḍiyār* belongs to Tiruvaṇṇāmalai, and he dragged here due to the grace of this Śivajōthi Siddhar⁵⁰⁴. This Śrirām and other ascetics are placed in the entrance hut of the *āśram*. They are engaged in collecting the entrance fee (Rs.10); and other donations from the visitors/devotees and giving tokens (with three lemon fruits). In this *āśram* no *yōga* or meditation is performed. Only keeping silence is considered as a great practice and prayer. Śivajōthi Siddhar himself advocated silence. In front of the Siddhar's room, where the Siddha used to sit and attend the queries of the devotees, the philosophies of popular Siddhas and songs from *Tirumandiram* are displayed in small banners. For example the songs describing about the characters of a true Siddha from *Tirumandiram*⁵⁰⁵ is displayed for the public.

⁵⁰³ Interview with Pugalendhi (32), āśramite, Śrī Śivajōthi Mōṇa Siddhar Āśram, 11.3.14

⁵⁰⁴ Interview with Sriram (40), āśramite, Śrī Śivajōthi Mōṇa Siddhar Āśram, 11.3.14

⁵⁰⁵ Song No. 2565, 8th *Tantra*, p.1050; and Song No.1463, 5th *Tantra*, p. 569

Tiruvāmāthur

Tiruvāmāthur (11°58'N; 79°28'E) is located approximately five kilometres northwest of Viḷupuram. It is the holy place where a great saint, an ascetic, a Siddha, a mystic by name *Vaṇṇa Sarabham* Daṇḍapāṇi Swāmigal attained *sajīva samādhi* (entering his own tomb alive) on 5th July. He was born in Tirunelvēli. He is popularly known as 'Murugadāsa Swāmigal' and '*Tiruppugaḷ* Swāmigal'. He was a great devotee of Lord Muruga. He visited many Muruga and Śiva temples and experienced eternal bliss in singing the glory of the deities of those places. He lived in Tiruvāmāthur for very long time. He has written the *sthalapurāna* of this temple translating from the Sanskrit original, *Nāgara Khānda* of the *Skānda mahāpurāna* in Tamil, on palm leaves, which comprises of 1000 verses. The *samādhi* of *Mahān Vaṇṇa Sarabham* Daṇḍapāṇi swāmigal is situated in a garden by the side of the Abhirāmēśvara temple. In the shrine of Lord Śaṇmukha, he established a *Samādhi maṇḍiram* (at present a functioning like a library), and composed '*Kaumāra Niśchayam*'. There is a stone image of this Siddha in a standing posture with a *daṇḍa* in his hand and dressed with a simple *laṅgōti*. There is also an Utsava mūrthy of this Siddha in this shrine. He has written '*Vāra Tiruppugaḷ*' and '*Navaratna Tiruppugaḷ*' connected with this shrine. There are 3483 poems to his credit connected with this temple⁵⁰⁶.

Samādhi of the Kuṇḍalini Māmuṇi- Tiruvakkarai

The *Samādhi* of Kuṇḍalini Māmuṇi is located on the southern side of the Sanctum Sanctorum of Chandramoulīśvara shrine. A *liṅga* is installed in this *Samādhi* and a shrine was built over it. In the entrance of this shrine, *Dvārapālakas* were kept in its either side. This *Samādhi* shrine may be a latter addition to this temple which is found without any inscription on its outer walls. Though there are nearly forty three inscriptions in the sanctum and *arthamaṇḍapa* walls of the Chandramoulīśvara temple, none of the inscriptions speaks about this Siddha⁵⁰⁷. Even though the

⁵⁰⁶ Besides above, there are many information about the miracles done by the Siddha is largely explained in the newly published *Sthalapurāna* of the temple. But most of them are not useful for our study in a historical point of view.

⁵⁰⁷ Of the forty-three inscriptions found on the walls and gates of the temple, inscriptions found right from the time of Rājarāja Cōḷā (saka year 1352 C.E.) and Kulottuṅga Cōḷā, to the time of Chemmandhai Kāṅgēya (1430 AD). See *South Indian Inscriptions* Vol. XII, No.246; Vol. XIII,

architectural style of this temple seems to be a late or post Vijayanagara it is without any ornamentation or sculptures in it, the life-size *Dvārapālakas* found in either side of the entrance may be similar to the Vijayanagara art. During this present century also many *maṇḍapas* and new shrines were constructed in this temple. Similarly, (in 2004) a *maṇḍapa* is also built in front of the *Kuṇḍalini* Siddhar shrine/*Samādhi*. At the top of its entrance, two sculptures in cement are installed. Of these two, the sculpture which found with long beard and big belly in a seated posture is said to be the *Kuṇḍalini* Siddhar and the sculpture which found in opposite of *Kuṇḍalini* Siddha as the demon *Vakrāsūran*, the grandson of the Siddha.

Irumbai

Irumbai (12°0'N; 79°47'E) is a small village located around ten kilometres to the south of Puducherry town in between the Tiṇḍivaṇam and Puducherry National Highways. This village is largely connected with the legend of Siddha Kaduveli that he did his penance near the Irumbai Mākālēsvara temple. This age-old temple was most probably constructed during the Cōlā period. The local traditions and temple *purāṇa* also have various kinds of legends associated with Kaduveli Siddhar and the temple at Irumbai is quite different from any other temple legend in the history of temple lore⁵⁰⁸. In the *ardhamaṇḍapa* of this temple, a life size bronze image of Kaduveli Siddha in a *padmāsana* posture is placed.

***Samādhi* of Veḷḷai Ādai Siddhar**

The *samādhi* of Veḷḷai Ādai Siddhar is located at Appupillaiyūr village in the name of *Śrī Chittrambala Sadāśiva Jīvālayam*. This village is situated near the Koḷiṇjanpārai-Pālakkād Road of Kēraḷā. Śrī Chiṛṛambala Sadāśiva Siddhar was the disciple of Swāmi Śivāṇanda *Paramahamsa*, the great disciple who claims to be the descendent of Bōhar. It is said that Siddha Agastya named this Ciṛṛambala Siddhar as 'Veḷḷai Ādai Siddhar'. His *samādhi* shrine and the *Śivaliṅga* was designed and established by him. When he was alive, he donated dresses and offered food to the needy. He also did constructive works of the temples and medical treatments to the

Nos.285, 317; Vol. XVII, Nos.186 to 230 and Vol. XIX, No. 240. See also *Annual Report on Epigraphy*, Nos. 160 to 207 of 1904.

⁵⁰⁸ One of the popular legend of Kaduveli Siddha is also given in the work of P. Raja and Rita Nath Keshari, *Glimpses of Pondicherry*, Busy Bee Books, Puducherry, 2005, pp. 5-7

poor. This Veḷḷai Ādai Siddhar lived for nearly 108 years as a celibate. Then he attained his *Samādhi* on *Mūla* star of Tamil month of *Karthigai* in 2008. This *samādhi* shrine was named as ‘*Padmakamala Chidambarālayam*’. In this *samādhi*, ‘*Chidambara Cakra*’ and ‘*Tiru Ambala Cakra*’ are placed together. The *Mahachittrambala yantra* was installed here for the benefit of the world peace. It is said that worshipping a living Siddha is equal to worshipping of 100 temples.

Ūdhiyūr Hills

There are many legends associated with this Ūdhiyūr hills. This hill is popularly known as Ūdhiyūrmalai, and also called as Sañjīvi hills. According to local tradition, when Hanuman carrying the Sañjīvi Mountain, a part of it was fell down at this place and formed these hills, therefore it is also called with above name. According to another tradition, the Koṅgaṇa Siddhar who stayed here produced gold by using base metals with herbal sauces. Since he produced the gold with the help of blast furnace using blow-pipe, this hills is called as Ūdhiyūr. (Here *ūdhi* in Tamil means blowing air by mouth, to kindle the fire). Besides, it is also named after Siddha Koṅgaṇar as Koṅgaṇagiri. The Koṅgaṇa Siddhar’s cave, where he stayed and did his penance is situated on the hill top of the Ūdhiyūrmalai. Inside the cave, one has to pass two entrances within the cave to reach the meditation place of the Siddha. This cave is located nearer to UtthaṇḍaVēlāyudha Swāmy temple; and this temple is located at the distance of 13 kms from the Kañjanūr-Palaṇi road. On the way to the Koṅgaṇa Siddhar cave, his disciple Śri Setṭi Thamibiran Siddhar’s *Samādhi* is located. All along the way to this cave, the path is surrounded by *vilva/bilva* (*aegle marmelos*) trees.

Historical Continuity of the Siddha Cult in Tamilnādu

During a particular period of time, this *Tāntric* Siddha cult was almost placed in a corner of the society due to the arrival of the Europeans and spread of the Western thoughts in India. However, the tradition was survived in different other forms, even it lost its importance and privileges as it possessed earlier. But suddenly this *Tāntric* Siddha cult once again started appearing in a refined form in new dimension, all along with other popular Hindu traditions and religions. Many of its practices were inculcated in the Hindu religion. Meanwhile, there emerged many

mystics who are all celebrated and followed by the common public as Siddhas, because of their philosophies, characters and other mystic powers. These mystics of the modern India, who emerged during the 19th and 20th centuries, were not isolated from the characteristics of their age. Through their personal experiences and innate powers, they attained divine powers and also believed and worshipped by others for their divinity in them. With the help of their inner experiences and powers, many of these modern Siddhas are come forward to change evils of the society and its immoral thoughts. Most of the saint-poets like Tāyumāṇavar, Rāmaliṅga Vaḷḷalār and Subramaṇiya Bhārathi identified themselves with the Siddhas and helped to provide continuity to the tradition. However, their traditions, religions and philosophies and their expressions shows that they were hailed from simple and humble origin.

There is no any proper definition made to define about the Siddhas and it had different connotations. For instance, persons who indulged in medical practices, magical or miracle workers, foretellers, fortune tellers, experts in astronomy, alchemical workers, *tāntric* practitioners, *yōgic* practitioners, mendicants in saffron, mad man in front of the temple or under the tree, all are now worshipped by the people as Siddhas⁵⁰⁹. Therefore, there arouse a big question, who is a siddha, but so far no proper answer found for that. However, these Siddha or Siddha-type practitioners all had in common that they saw or presented themselves as ascetic seekers after enlightenment or an equal goal within the Brahmanical tradition. The Siddha's spiritual descendants diversified and could be found in later centuries in a variety of garbs, from respectable royal-temple-priests to itinerant minstrels and religious mendicants. The Siddha thus evolved as a cultural category, taking shape and making sense within a particular social context. Frequently beggars, quacks and dubious god men are referred to by the name of Siddhas and they soon assume the status of religious gurus. Tamils maintain a great fascination with this freely wandering figure with long hair and beard. They accord a place of honour for the local Siddhar in the temples. The tales and myths that surround the unknown figures of Siddhars in the village temples claim often that the divine power of the temples

⁵⁰⁹ Earlier the term 'Siddha' is only used to refer the Jain monks who attained *mōkṣā* or liberation. The term 'Siddhar' is connected with Jaina and Buddhist religions for their psycho-physical exercises and practices. Buddha in one of his teachings says to 'treat the body as wound'. In Tamil, the word '*kāyam*' is used to denote the wound, now also for body.

depend on the Siddhar who chose to shrine himself. In a way religious practice and storytelling are ways of writing the social history of these heroes⁵¹⁰.

All the Siddhas are pure soul who was found with both formally distinct and indistinct ways of understanding. Pure cognition of this kind complies with the nature of the soul as a spiritual function exclusively. The Siddhas are freed from all kinds of *Karma*; they live forever in the highest of the regions and represent the highest possible development of a being. The basic ideologies of the Siddhas were shaped by their existing social position. Most of them came from families of shepherds, temple-drummers, potters, fishermen, hunters, etc. In fact, many legends were in vague about the Siddhas that some of them came from other culture traditions as well, Chinese and Arabic. They had connection with these people in the fields of medicine, alchemy and astronomy. It is said that Tirumūlar came from Kaśmir. It is difficult to determine the authenticity of these stories. But they definitely point to certain intermingling of the Siddhas and Muslim saints. It is important that Muslims Sūfis namely Pīr Mohammed, Mastān Sāhib, Badē Sāhib, Moulā Sāhib and to some extent the Shridi Sāi Bābā are included in the list of Siddhas. All this must have widened their cultural horizon and contributed to their liberal and egalitarian outlook. It clearly shows that they were ranged against the caste distinctions practiced by the so-called higher castes. Thus, there was no place for any discrimination with regard to caste in the brotherhood policy of the Siddhas⁵¹¹.

In the present context, there exists many gods with the vast array of religious activities. However, the Siddha cult in Tamiḷnādu has a very sophisticated place among the devotees. Every day, this cult is reforming variety of practices, to help the spiritual seekers through their inward journey. Many of these practices such as meditation and other types of *yōga* can be adapted to other religions. Even though this cult was separated and isolated for sometimes, it still has a common belief that prevails among the devotees for their liberation. Some people are more engaged in the activities like “getting and accumulating” the wealth or achieving the fame and power. Basically these people seek happiness through physical pleasure or sensual pleasure. Most of them believe that the sensual pleasures of eating, drinking, sex, and

⁵¹⁰ M.D. Muthukumaraswamy, *Op.cit.*, pp. 3-4.

⁵¹¹ Braj Ranjan Mani, *Op.cit.*, pp. 158-159.

physical comforts are the best and real way to achieve happiness. From the outset of human civilization, man has been on a religious quest. It seems that religion also found to be as old as humanity itself. At present, the vast majority of the people in the world continue to follow their religion for their successful life⁵¹². When the people get disappointed, when they lost their confidence, they need one super power to solve their problem. When they are approaching the god, there is a distance/differences like god and devotees. But when they are approaching the Siddhas, there are some similarities that both are living or lived in the society; they are all one among the people. Since they are in human form, it is easy to the people, who are in some problems to approach those Siddhas and get some solutions.

⁵¹² Joseph Stoutzenberger, *Op.cit*, pp. 165, 266

Historical Continuity of the Siddha Cult in Tamilnādu



Fig.163, Siddha Pulasthiyar Worshipped Here. Fig.164, Vibasitthu Muṇi and Rōmariṣi Abirāmi Temple, Tirukadavur, TN. Viruthagiriswara Koil, Virudhachalam



Fig.165, A Siddha, Chinnagāndhipuram, Palani Tāluk, T.N



Fig.166, Karuvūr Siddha Shrine, Brahadīsvara temple, Tañjāvūr, TN



Fig.167, Pāmbāṭṭi Siddhar Cave, Maruthamalai, Coimbatore, T.N.



Fig.168, Terracotta Images of Siddhas, Foot Hills of Poṇṇimalai, TN



Fig.169, Samādhi of the Poṇṇimalai Siddhar, on the top of the Poṇṇi Hills, Palāṇi, TN



Fig.170, Meikaṇḍār Siddhar Cave and *Jīva Samādhi*, Kaṇṇivādi, Dindugal, T.N



Fig.171, Koṅgaṇa Siddha's Cave & Setṭi Thambirān *Jīva Samādhi*, Kāṅkēyam, TN



Fig.172, Siddha Paṭṭinathār Temple, Tiruvotriyūr, Chennai, Tamilnādu.



Fig.173, Virupākṣa Cave, Tiruvannāmalai, Ramaṇa stayed here during 1899 - 1916



Fig.174, Skanda Āśram, Tiruvannāmalai, TN Ramaṇa stayed here 7 years, 1916 -1922



Fig.175, Sri Māṇūr Siddhar Jīva Samādhi, 2008, Māṇūr, Palāṇi, TN



Fig.176, Rāmasāmi Siddhar-Pāppāthi Ammāl Jīva Samādhi, Paṇdrimalai, Dindigul



Fig.177, Śrī Jyōthi Mouṇa Nirvāṇa Swāmy Jīva Samādhi, Kasavaṇapaṭṭi, Dindigul, TN



Fig.178, Guru Rāmasāmy Siddhar *Jīva Samādhi*, Kaṇṇivādi, Dindigul, T.N



Fig.179, Gōrakha Siddha *Jīva Samādhi*, Vadakku Poigai Nallūr, Nāgaṭṭiṇam, TN



Fig.180, Ascetics staying here and used to beg for their food only at night in the village



Fig.181, Sadai Sāmy & Kaṇṇādi Sāmy Jīva Samādhi, Foot hills, Tiruvaṇṇāmalai, TN



Fig.182, Śeśadhri Sāmy Āśram; images of Siddhas installed inside. Tiruvaṇṇāmalai, TN



Fig.183, Vitobānanda Jīva Samādhi, Kadalādi & His Cave on hilltop of Parvathamalai



Fig.184, Veṭṭaveli Siddhar *Jīva Samādhi*, Ālpet, Cuddalore, TN



Fig.185, *Yōgasāla*, Lower Ahobila, A.P. Fig.186, Siddha Kaduveli, Irumbai, T.N.
Celebrated Siddha Shrines/*Samādhis* in Puducherry



Fig.187, Sāmy Siddhānanda *Jīva Samādhi*, Karuvadikuppam, Puducherry, 19th c



Fig. 188, Śri Rāmaparadēsi Siddhar Jīva Samādhi, Villianūr, Puducherry (19th c)



Fig.189, Vaṇṇrapradesi Sāmigaḷ Samādhi, Odiyampet, Puducherry

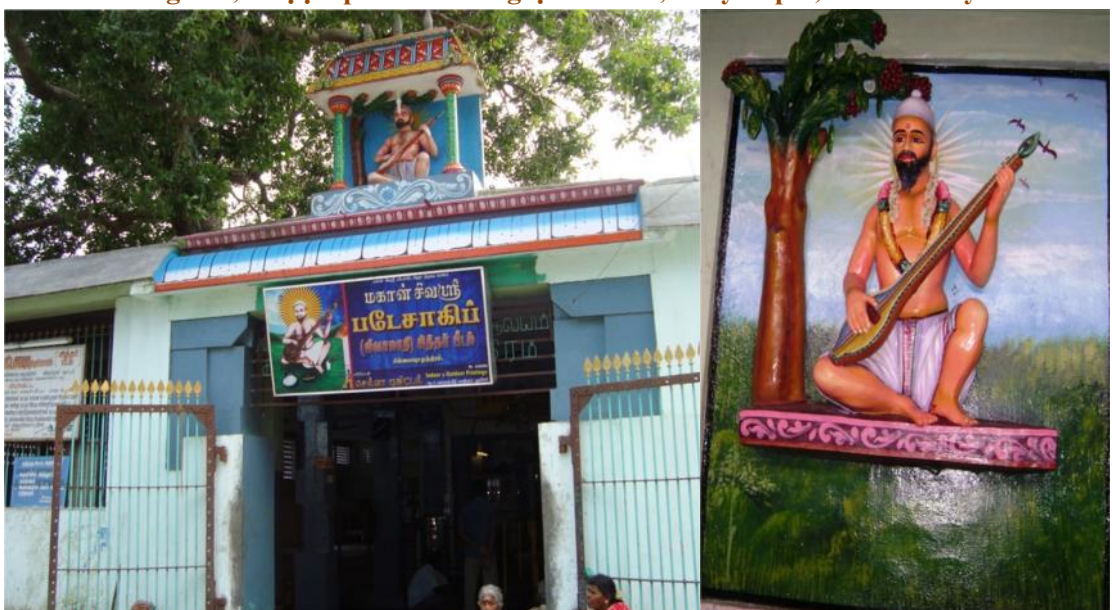


Fig.190, Mahān Bade Sāhib Jīva Samādhi, Chinnabābu Samudram, near Puducherry

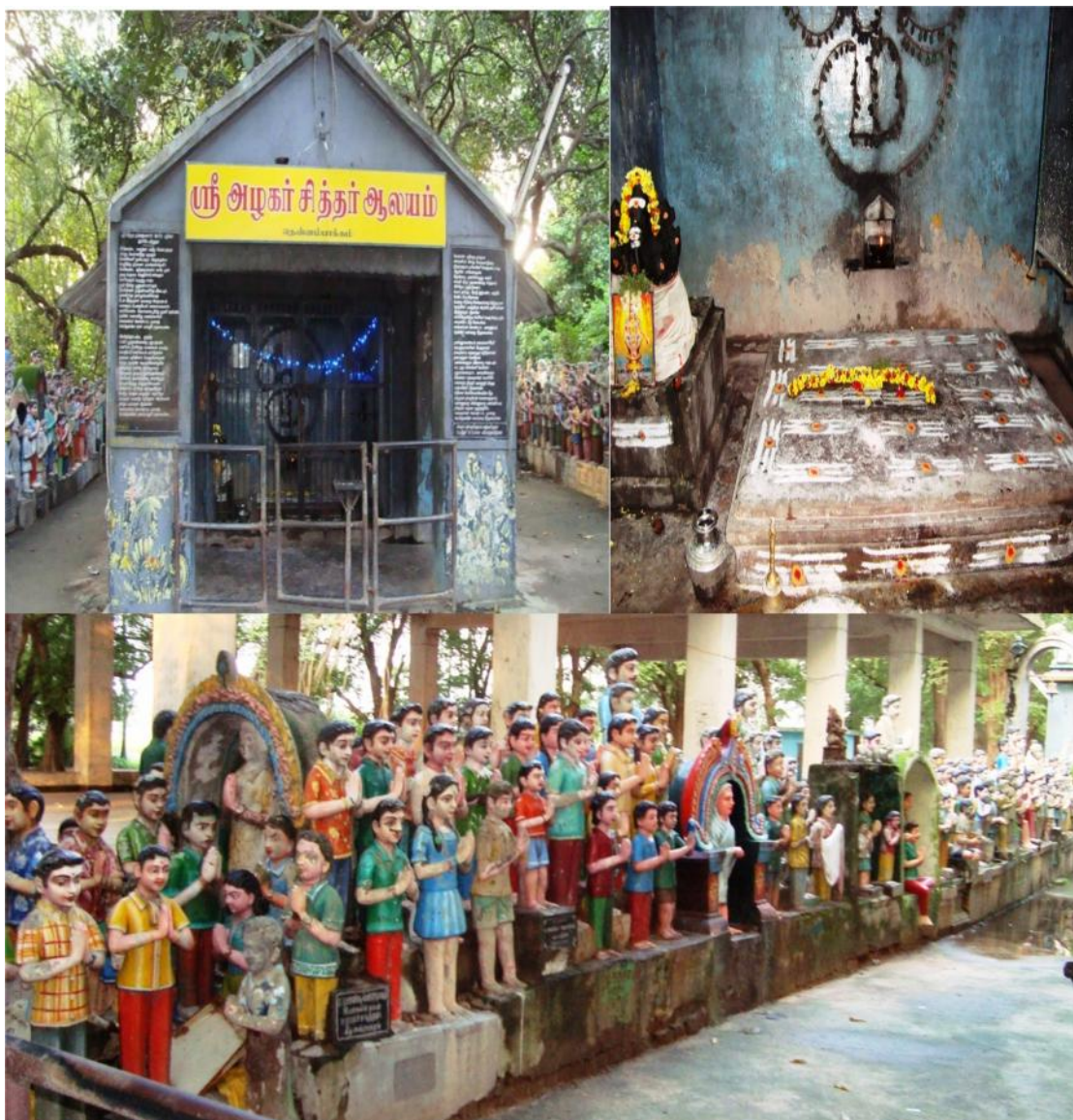


Fig.191, Alagar Siddhar *Samādhi* Shrine & offerings to him, Teṇṇampākkam Village, PY



Fig.192, Śri Thēṅgāi Sāmy Siddhar *Jīva Samādhi*, near Sultānpēt, Puducherry



Fig.193, Śrī Dakṣiṇāmūṛthy Siddhar *Jīva Samādhī*, Thennal, Puducherry
 Historical Continuity: Some Siddhas(?) of contemporary period



Fig.194, A Siddha, Āranmula, Kēraḷa Fig.195, A Siddha at Kāñchi Kāmāṭchi Temple



Figs.196,197 & 198 - Siddha like ascetics in the temple of Tiruvaṇṇāmalai,TN



Fig.199, A Siddha at Tiruvaṇṇāmalai, TN



Fig.200, Agattiyar (as called by the people)



Fig.201, Siddha Duruvāsa (as he told)



Fig.202, Siddhars at Parvathamalai

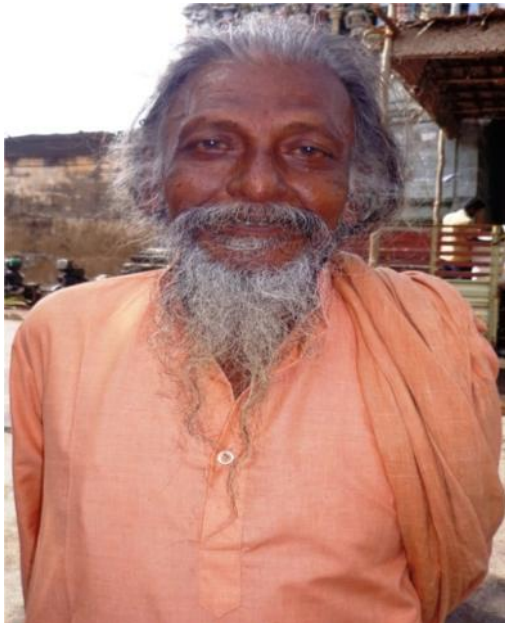


Fig.203, Pāṭṭu Siddhar Nārāyaṇasāmy, Sīkāḷi



Fig.204, Śrī Mōṇa Siddhar, Chetthavarai, Senji

DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES

Fig. 164: This is found in the temple premises of Viruthagirīśvara temple at Virudhāchalam. In this, along with other minor deities, the images of Śrī Vibhasithu Muṇi and Rōmariṣi is depicted as his right hand is in *varadha mudrā*, found with long ears, wearing *rudrākṣamāla*, etc.

Fig. 165: This isolated sculpture is found in Chinṇagāndhipuram village of Paḷaṇi tāluk, Dindigul dist., Tamiḷnādu. Devotees refer to this sculpture as that of Siddha Bōgar who came here to prepare herbal medicines. He is seated in a *lalitāsana* pose, his left hand in *lōla-hasta mudrā* and his right hand is *chin mudrā*.

Fig. 166: This is the shrine dedicated to Siddha Karuvūrār in the Brahādīśvara temple, Tañjāvūr. It is obviously a later addition located behind the sanctum of Brahādīśvara temple complex of Tañjāvūr. Inside this shrine, a statue of Siddha Karuvūrār seated in a *siddhāsana* pose is installed and is offered daily worship by the devotees. It is an open shrine without any doors.

Fig. 167: A separate shrine is dedicated to Siddha Pāmbāṭṭi in the premises of Marudhamalai Murugaṇ temple, Coimbatore dist., about 12 kilometers from the town of Coimbatore. This is located on the hilltop to the east of the main shrine and one have to go down the steps to reach this cave shrine. It is said that for many years Siddha Pāmbāṭṭi stayed here and performed miracles. Inside this cave, a big stone is found in a snake like structure adjacent to the mountain rocks. A *līnga* is installed along with other minor Nāga stones. More number of devotees are offering daily worshipping here.

Fig.168: These terracotta images are said to be those of the Siddhars who stayed and prepared their herbal medicines here. It is located (before 4 kms) under the foot hills of Poṇṇimalai, which is nearer to the Āyakudi village, Paḷaṇi tāluk, Dindigul dist., Tamiḷnādu. Besides, under the sanctum of the temple, many terracotta Figures of such ascetics in miniature size are excavated at the time of its renovation.

Fig. 169: This is said to be the *samādhi* of Poṇṇimalai Siddhar, a disciple of Bōgar of Paḷaṇi. It is found in the top of the Poṇṇi hills. Along with this, many other stones are also installed and said to be the burials (*jīva samādhis*) of other Siddhars who attained *Samādhi* here. This hilltop is very difficult to access (in 2009). The size of the bricks (40 cms long) found on the top of the hill indicate that they could be of some antiquity. Once in a year, the *gurupūjā* is observed here. However, for the past five more years, no one worshipped here due to the difficulty of climbing this mountain. Therefore devotees limited their worship up to the above said temple (Fig.168) under the foothills of Poṇṇimalai. (However, some arrangements were made to access this hilltop from its western side in 2013).

Fig. 170: This cave like structure is found in the middle of the hills, which is located some two kilometres to the west of the Kaṇṇivādi village in Dindigul dist. It is said

that Meikaṇḍār Siddhar along with other Siddhars like Bōgar of Paḷaṇi, were engaged in preparing the herbal medicines here. He did penance in this cave and attained *samādhi* here. A shrine with a *līṅga* installed inside the cave is said to be his *samādhi*. Rarely devotees visit this place. Annual *gurupūjā* is also celebrated to him.

Fig. 171: This is located in inside of the forest on the Kāṅkēyam-Paḷaṇi road, from Coimbatore. It is said that Koṅgaṇa Siddha did penance in this cave. Next to this, is the *jīva samādhi* of a local Siddha named Seṭṭi Thambiran. He healed many with his herbal medicines. He stayed and prepared medicines and attained *samādhi* here.

Fig.172: This shrine is dedicated to Siddha Pattiṇathār who attained *samādhi* here. It is located near the seashore of Tiruvotṛiyūr near Chennai. Inside this premises, *samādhis* of few other Siddhas are also found. Devotees are visiting here daily and chanting the mantras here.

Fig.173: This is the inner view of the Virupākṣa cave, located some hundred meters above, in the Tiruvaṇṇāmalai hills. In this cave, Ramaṇa Maḥarīṣi stayed from 1899 to 1916.

Fig.174: Skanda *Āśram* is located few hundred meters away from the Virupākṣa cave. Here Ramaṇa stayed for seven years from 1916 to 1922. This place is now under the care of the Ramaṇāśram trust.

Fig.175: This is the *jīva samādhi* of one Mānūr Siddhar. He is named after this location, where he stayed and attained his *samādhi* in this Mānūr village. This *Samādhi* shrine is located on the highway from the Mānūr village to Paḷaṇi. But he is not as much popular as other Siddhars and very few people know him.

Fig. 176: Paṇṇimalai village is located on the hills leading to Thaṇrikudi in Dindigul dist. This village in the hill range seems to be in existence from the medieval period onwards, where the *maṇḍapas* and remnants of post Vijayanagara period are found. In the middle of the village, a *samādhi* shrine of Paṇṇimalai Siddhar (as he is popularly known) is located. His real name is Rāmasāmy, he attained his *samādhi* on 24.04.1906 and along with him, and his wife Pāppāthi Ammal also attained *samādhi* on 12.08.1965. The shrine is under the care of their close relatives. It is said that both displayed miraculous powers.

Fig. 177: This *samādhi* of Jothi Mouṇa Nirvāṇa Sāmy is located in the Kasavaṇapaṭṭi village in the Dindigul dist. This Siddha always moved around nude and only accepted the cigarettes. He performed many miracles in this village; because of which the devotees constructed the big shrine and a *maṇḍapa* after he attained *samādhi*. The person who appears in the picture with ochre dress is the disciple of this Siddha, who is taking care of the house, where the Siddha stayed and attained *samādhi*.

Fig. 178: This is the *jīva samādhi* of Guru Rāmasāmy Siddhar of Kaṇṇivādi village of Dindigul dist. The *samādhi* shrine is located near the village bus stop. He is popular in

this village. Often *pūjās* and other oblation are conducted here. He was lived and attained his *samādhi* in this place.

Fig. 179: This is said to be the *jīva samādhi* of Gōrakha Siddhar. It is located in the Vadakku Poigai Nallur village of Nāgapattiṇam. Recently a big *maṇḍapa* was built in which ascetics from different parts are coming and staying. In the entrance of this temple, the eighteen Tamil Siddhar images were installed.

Fig. 180: Devotees and ascetics from various parts are coming and staying here. They go for begging around the village once a day in night time. For that they used to carry the staff in their shoulder which is tied with ochre cloths on its two sides, as shown in the picture.

Fig. 181: Around the foothills of Tiruvaṇṇāmalai, there are thousands of *samādhis*, said to be the *jīva samādhis* of the Siddhas who lived there. The *samādhi* of Sadai Sāmy and Kaṇṇādi Sāmy as shown in here which are located in the premises of Śēśādri Sāmy *Āśram* next to the Ramaṇāśram.

Fig. 182: This is the Śēśādri Sāmy *Āśram* located in Tiruvaṇṇāmalai in which the statues of Popular Siddhas of Tamiḷnādu are installed.

Fig. 183: This is the *jīva samādhi* of Sāmy Vitobānanda of Parvathamalai. It is located in outstretch of Kadalādi village, on the way to the Parvathamalai of Tiruvaṇṇāmalai dist. Next to this, is the picture of the *āśram* of Sāmy Vitobānanda, located on the hilltop of Parvathamalai. Now this *āśram* is under construction, and it is constructed on the cave where Sāmy Vitobānanda stayed and performed penance. Few feet towards its north, is the temple dedicated to Mallikārjuna and Brahmaramba as the replica of Śrisailam.

Fig. 184: This is the *jīva samādhi* of Vettaveli Siddhar. It is located on the southern bank of the River South Pennār at Ālpet nearer to the ECR road of Cuddalore. Though this shrine is a recent one, the *samādhi* may be more than 100 years old.

Fig. 185: This is a painting of a *Sādhaka* seated in a *siddhāsana* depicting the *sat-cakras* of the human body as indicated earlier in Fig. 139. It is found (in 2009) at the *yogasāla* near the Bāla Narasimha temple, on the way to the Chatravada Narasimha temple at Lower Ahobilam. But by 2012, this *yogasāla* was demolished and a new shrine for *Navagraha* Narasimha was constructed.

Fig. 186: This image of Kaduveli Siddhar is found in front of the Amman shrine of the Irumbai Mahākālēśvara temple near Puduchērry. He is depicted in a Siddhāsana pose exactly in the same way as depicted above in Fig. 185.

Fig. 187: This is the *jīva samādhi* of Sāmy Siddhānanda, the most celebrated Siddha of Puduchērry. It is located near the cremation ground of Karuvadikuppam. This shrine belongs to the 19th century. Here the national poet Mahākavi Subramaṇi Bharathi stayed and wrote poems on this siddha. There is a separate statue installed

for this poet inside this shrine. Day by day, this shrine is attaining importance and attracting more number of devotees. At present, addition and renovation works are going on.

Fig. 188: This is the *samādhi* shrine of Śrī Rāmaparadēsi Siddhar. It is located on the Villupuram-Puduchērry highway in Villianūr. Recently, a big *maṇḍapa* is constructed on the *samādhi* and it is also attracting more number of devotees.

Fig. 189: This is the *samādhi* shrine of Śrī Vaṇṇāraparadēsi Siddhar, located in the Odiyampattu village of Puduchērry. Recently a *maṇḍapa* is constructed on this *samādhi* and it attracts good number of devotees.

Fig. 190: This is the *jīva samādhi* of Mahān Badē Sāhib, a Sūfi siddha, who later assimilated into Śaivism by the devotees who added him the agnomen of ‘Śiva Śrī’ as prefix. Like Siddhānanda temple, this *samādhi* shrine is also attracting thousands of devotees every Thursday and less than hundred daily. Devotees are coming and staying here for getting relief from their diseases.

Fig. 191: This is the *jīva samādhi* of Aḷagar Siddhar. This *samādhi* shrine is located in the midst of the tamarind groove in the Thennampākkam village near Ēmbalam of Puduchērry. There is a belief that devotees those who wants child, or their children’s education, health etc. they should have to offer a statue of a girl or boy to this Siddha. Thus their desires get fulfils after some weeks. Therefore, one can see here hundreds of such concrete statues of human Figures.

Fig. 192: This is the *jīva samādhi* of Thēṅgāi Sāmy Siddhar. It is located in front of the Arumbarthapuram electric substation, on the Puduchērry-Villupuram highway. Recently, foundation was laid and works are also in progress on construction of a new *Samādhi* shrine and *maṇḍapa* here.

Fig.193: This is the *samādhi* shrine of Dakṣiṇāmūrthy Siddhar. It is located in a cemetery ground nearer to the Villupuram-Puduchērry highway in the Thennal village of Puduchērry. Recently foundation stone is laid for constructing a *maṇḍapa* and pillars are also erected in front of this *samādhi*.

Fig.194: He is a living Siddha living in the Āranmula temple of Kēraḷā. He is found with long matted hair, *rudrākṣamāla* in his neck and wearing ochre dress. (But he refused to be photographed).

Fig.195: This is the photograph of a Siddha (taken in 2011) in a white garment immersed in meditation in the Kāmāṭchi Amman temple at Kāñcipuram. He is found with long hair and beard. But nothing is known about him. (He refused to respond). The local devotees also know him since a long time but they do not know his personal details.

Fig.196, 197 and 198 are the Siddha like ascetics living in the Aruṇāchalēśvara temple at Tiruvaṇṇāmalai. They are addressing themselves as Siddhas and offering

the sacred ashes (*vibhūti*) to the devotees who approach them, but expecting money. But many of the features found in the medieval sculptures like long matted hair, beard, *rudrākṣamāla*, and copper ring in their wrist etc. are also found in them which shows the continuity of that tradition.

Fig.199: He is wandering in the Tiruvaṇṇamalai hills. He is found with matted hair and covered his body with red-ochre cloth. People are calling him a Siddhar.

Fig.200: He is called Siddha Agastya by the people by referring to his shape and size. He is wandering inside the Tiruvaṇṇamalai temple. Most of his appendages and attributes like *rudrākṣamāla* and copper ring in his (right) wrist resemble the medieval sculptures. (See also Fig. 196-198, 201, 204)

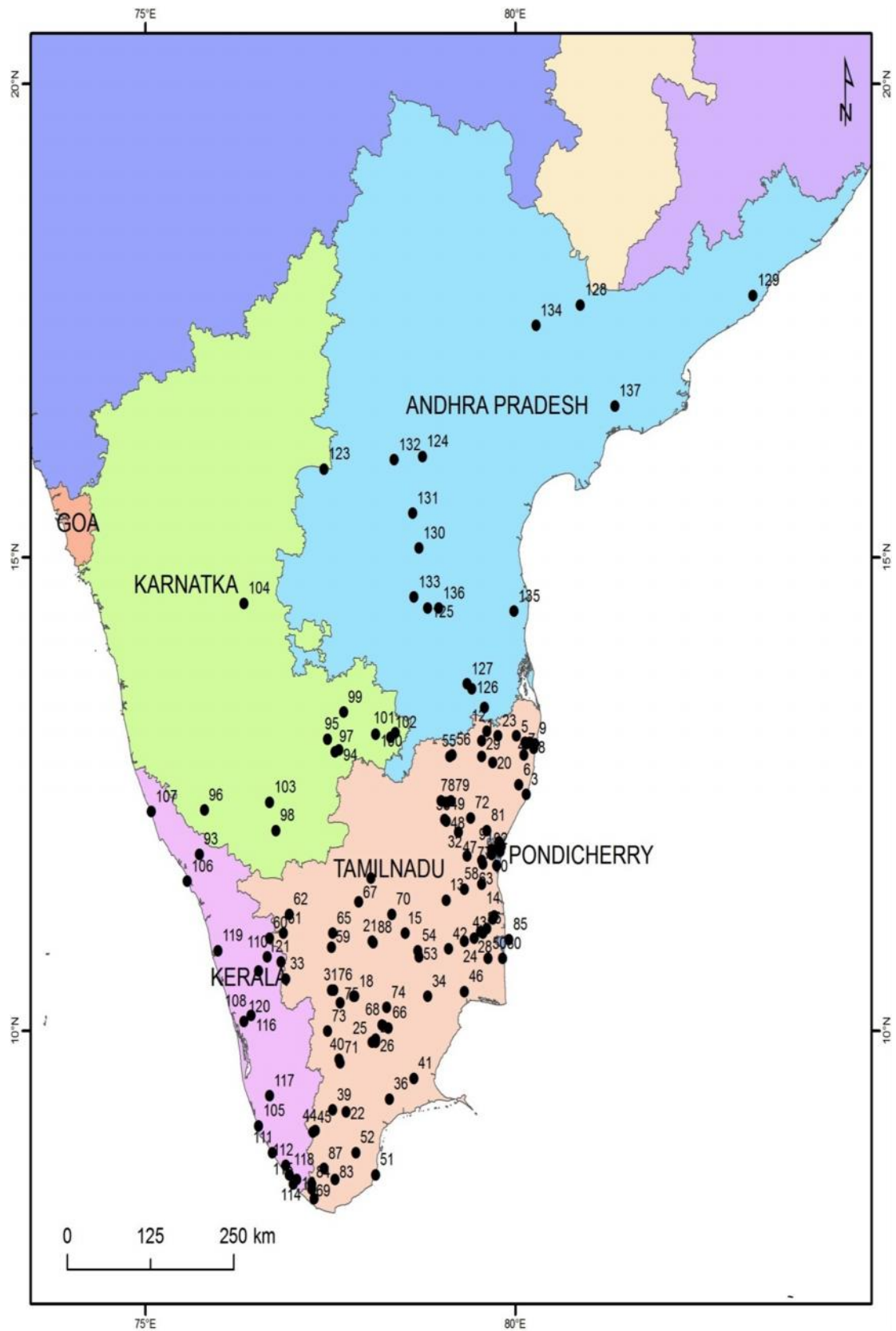
Fig.201: He introduced himself as a Siddha Durvāsa. He is wandering in the streets of Tiruvaṇṇamalai, but he is the native of Puduchērry. His words are more philosophical, ferocious, true to his name of the legendary sage ‘*Dūrvasa*’ known for his tantrums. Among his other attributes, he is wearing a copper bangle in his right wrist.

Fig.202: These are the Siddha like ascetics seated all along the ways leading to the Parvathamalai. Besides them many of the similar ascetics found in all the celebrated *Siddha-kṣētras* like Velliaṅgiri, Paḷaṇi, Tiruvaṇṇamalai, Kollimalai, Kañcamalai, Saduragiri, Chidambaram, etc.

Fig.203: He is known as the Pāṭṭu Siddhar. His real name is Nārāyaṇasāmy. He is living in Sīrkālī town and often found in the Saṭṭaināthar temple at Sīrkālī.

Fig.204: He is Śrī Jōthi Mōṇa Siddhar, presently established his *āśram* at the foothills of Chethavarai village near Seṇji. He is offering sacred ashes and lemon fruits to the devotees who approach him with problems. Along with him, some of his disciples are also staying here. As a part of their tradition he is wearing a copper bangle in his wrist exactly in the same manner as shown in the sculptural representations. (see also Fig. 201)

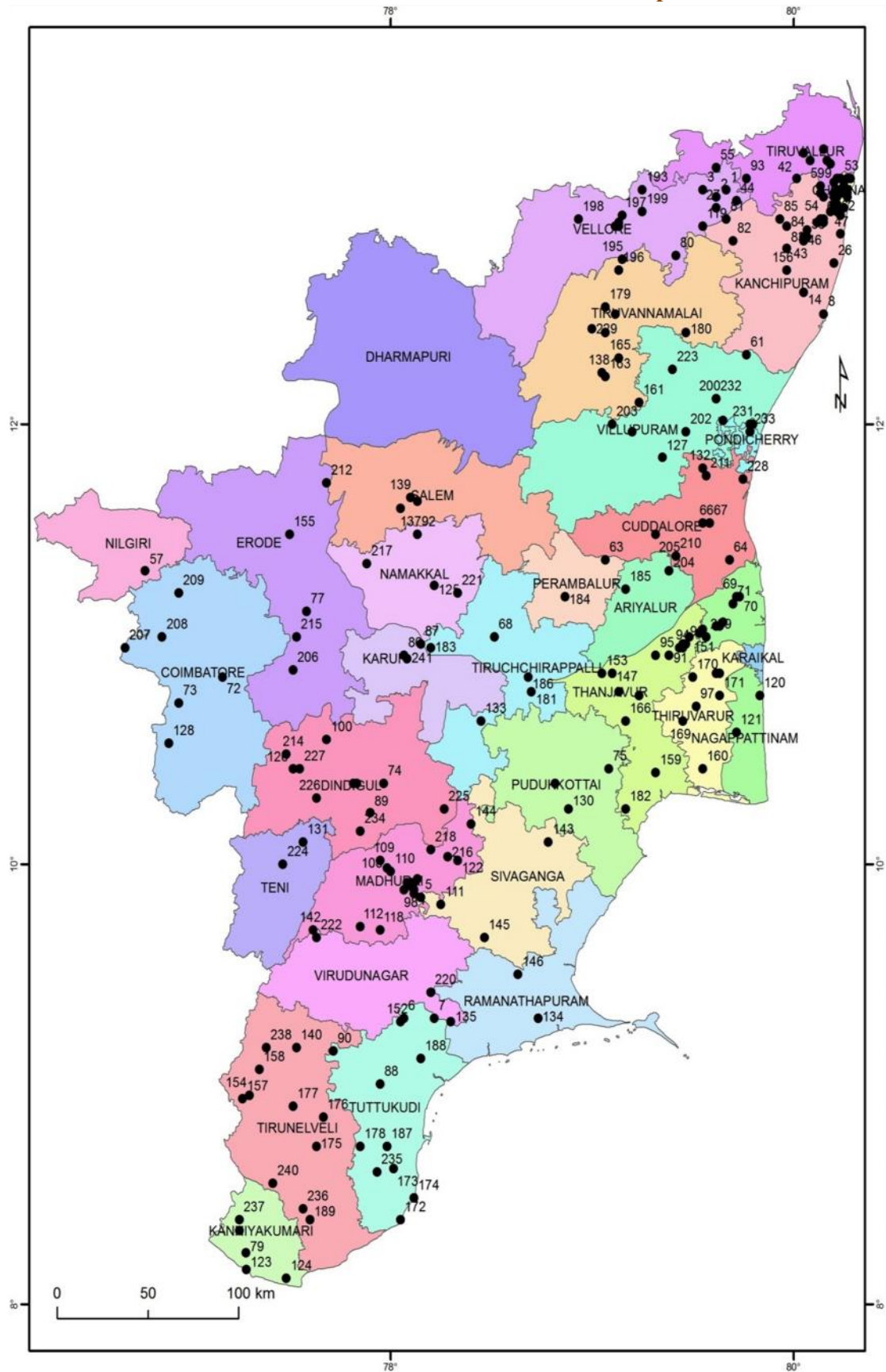
MAP – 1: Distribution of Celebrated Siddha Centres in the parts of South India



Legend for the Map of south India

1 Narasiṅgapuram	45 Kuṭṭālam	92 Nallāthūr
2 Aruppukōṭṭai	46 Paṭṭukōṭṭai	93 Kōrkādu
3 Kalpākkam	47 Vēṭṭavalam	94 Ulsūr, Bangalore
4 Vadapaḷaṇi	48 Tiruvaṇṇāmalai	95 Soḷadēvanahalli
5 Pūnamallī	49 Pūṇḍi	96 Kudagumalai (Coorg)
6 Tirukaḷukunṇam	50 Tiruvārūr	97 Kalāsipālayam
7 Mādampākkam	51 Tiruchendūr	98 Naṇjangudu
8 Tiruvāṇmiyūr	52 Vallanādu (Tirunelvēli)	99 Nandi
9 Mylāpūr	53 Trichy	100 Kōlār
10 Tiruniṇḍravūr	54 Śrī Raṅgam	101 Mulabāgal
11 Tirumullaivāyil	55 Vēlūr	102 Āvaṇi
12 Tiruthaṇi	56 Viriṇḷipuram	103 Tipu Palace
13 Chidambaram	57 Mailam	104 Jagalūr
14 Vadalūr	58 Viruthāchalam	105 Edapaḷḷykoṭṭa
15 Tiruvāvadutuṇai	59 Ūthiyūr (Coimbatore)	106 Vadakarā
16 Sīrkālī	60 Vēḷḷiaṅgiri	107 Kaṇjankādu
17 Vaithīśvaran Kōil	61 Marudamalai	108 Kāladi
18 Kasavaṇampattī	62 Kāramadai	109 Ālathūr
19 Kaḷiyakkāvilai	63 Tiruvathigai	110 Pālakkād
20 Kāñchipuram	64 Kaṇṇivādi	111 Varkāla
21 Karūr	65 Śivaṇmalai (Erōde)	112 Cheṅkōṭṭukōṇam
22 Kaḷugumalai	66 Ariṭṭāpattī	113 Thycāud
(Kōvilpattī)	67 Tiruchenkōdu	114 Erithavūr –
23 Tiruvalaṅgādu	68 Āḷagarkōil	Balarāmapuram
(Kumbakōṇam)	69 Tiruvattāru	115 Viḷiṇḷam
24 Swāmimalai	70 Kollimalai	116 Kālady
25 Tiruparaṅkunṇam	71 Sathuragiri	117 Āranmula
26 Madurai	72 Chettavarai	118 Tiruvanaṇṭhapuram
27 Siddharkādu	73 Thēṇi	119 Tirunāvāi
(Mayilādutuṇai)	74 Paṇṇimalai	120 Āluvā
28 Māthirimaṅgalam	75 Tandikudi	121 Koliṇḷampārai
29 Vadakku Poikai Nallūr	76 Āyakudi	122 Nārāyaṇavaṇam
30 Nāgapattīṇam	77 Maṇjakuppam	123 Mantrālayam
31 Paḷaṇi	78 Parvathamalai	124 Śrisailam
32 Tiruveṇṇainallūr	79 Mēlmaruvathūr	125 Kadapa
33 Vēṭṭaikāranpuṭhūr	80 Irumbai	126 Tirupathi
(Pollāchi)	81 Mailam	127 Tirumala
34 Puḍukōṭṭai	82 Moratāṇḍi	128 Baḍhrāchalam
35 Rājapālayam	83 Tirukkuruṅgudi	129 Simhāchalam
36 Rāmēśvaram	84 Tiruparappu	130 Ahōbilam
37 Kaṇjamalai (Salem)	85 Pērūr	131 Mahānandhi
38 Skandāśramam (Salem)	86 Maruthur	132 Siddhēśvaram
39 Saṅkaran Kōil	87 Puṭhēri	133 Chidipirala
40 Thāṇipārai	88 Thāṇṭhōṇṇimalai	134 Vutukūru
(Sathuragiri)	(Karūr)	135 Nellūr
41 Śrivilliputhūr	89 Karuvadi Kuppam	136 Siddhavatam
42 Tiruvaiyāru	90 Puḍuchēry	137 Siddhāpuram
43 Tiruvidaimaruthūr	91 Chiṇṇa Bābu	
44 Tenkāsi	Samudram	

MAP-2: Distribution of Celebrated Siddha Centres in the parts of Tamilnādu

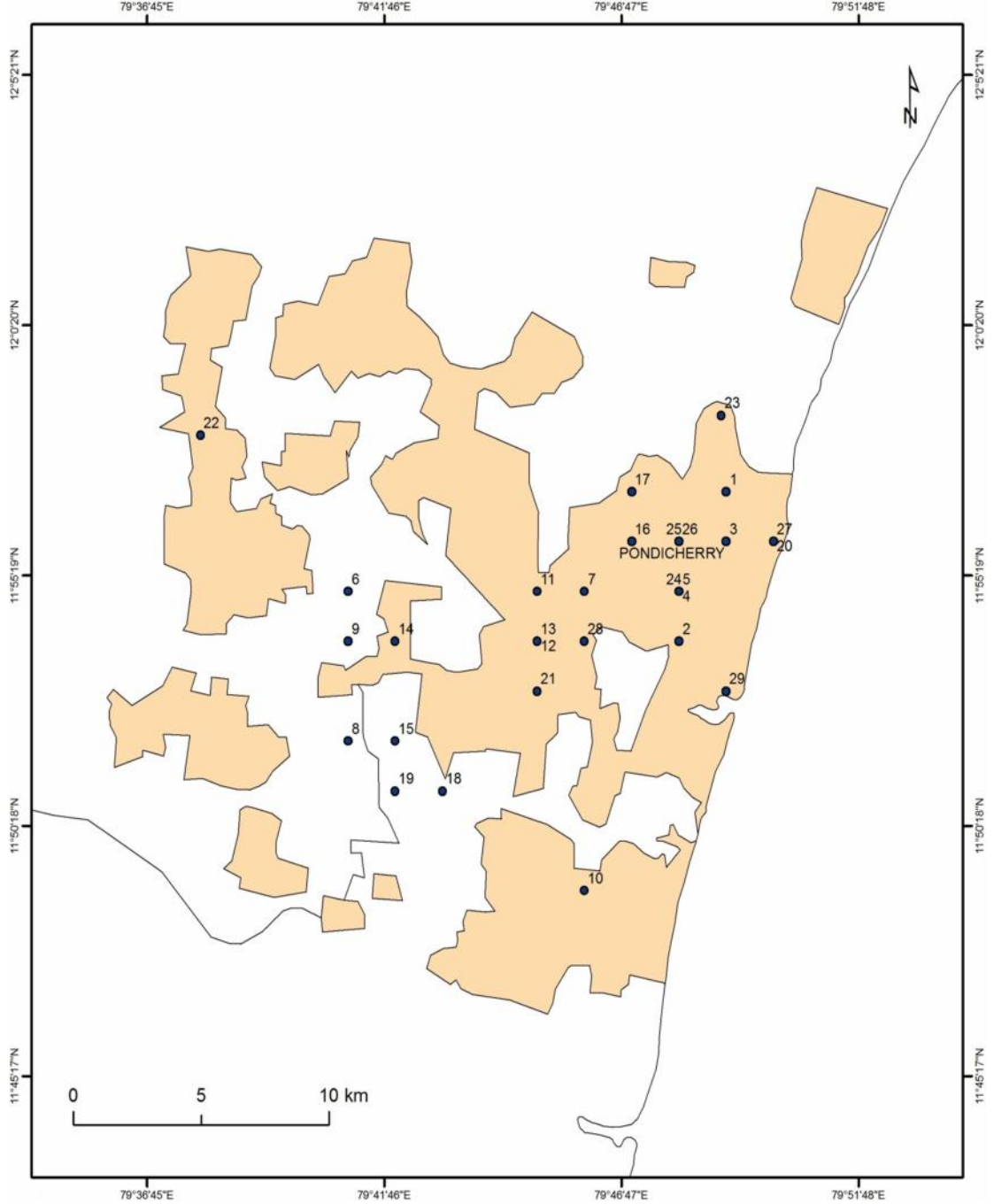


Legend for the Map of Tamilnādu

1 Sirunāmalli	49 Kāranōdai	97 Kūnthalūr
2 Nāgavīdu	50 Perambūr	98 Tiruparaṅkunṇam
3 Narasiṅgapuram	51 Sembiam	99 Madurai
4 Aruppukōṭṭai	52 Kolathūr Peravalūr	100 K.Rengāpālayam
5 Puliyūr	53 Erukañchēri	101 Kākkāthōppu
6 Vēmbūr	54 Tirumullaivāyil	102 Simmakal
7 Vadakku Natham	55 Tirutaṇi	103 Avaṇiyāpuram
8 Kalpākkam	56 Ūrapākkam	104 Āṇḍālpuram
9 Ambattūr	57 Āṇandāśramam	105 Kalavāsal
10 Vadapaḷaṇi	58 Padinallur	106 Gōripālayam
11 Rājakīlpākkam	59 Alamādhi	107 Katha Kiṇṇaṇu
12 Aḷiṇṇivākkam	60 Chennai	108 Tiruvēdagam
13 Pūṇamallī	61 Ōṅūr	109 Chōlavandān
14 Tirukaḷukunṇam	62 Saidāpēt	110 Kodimaṅgalam
15 Vēlachērry	63 Chidambaram	111 Tirupuvaṇam
16 Perambūr	64 Sabānāyagar Street	112 T.Kallupaṭṭi
17 Guindy	65 Tirukālar	113 Kūrainādu
18 Ālandūr	66 Vadalūr	114 Mayilāduturai
19 Kōdambākkam	67 Vaḷḷalār nagar	115 Siddharkādu
20 Kaṇḍanchāvadi	68 Tiruvāvaduturai	116 Māthirimaṅgalam
21 Kṛiśnāmpēt	69 Sīrkāḷi	117 Kuthālam
22 KK Nagar	70 Teṇpāthi	118 Vadakkan Paṭṭi
23 Mādampākkam	71 Vaitheeswaran Koil	119 Vadakku Poikai
24 Chitlapākkam	72 Pūrāndan Pālayam	Nallūr
25 Tiruvāṇmiyūr	73 Puravipālayam,	120 Nagapatinam
26 Tirupōrūr	Pollāchi	121 Ettukudi
27 Nemili	74 Dindugal	122 Melur
28 Nuṅgambākkam	75 Puthupaṭṭi	123 Maṇḍaikādu
29 Chētpat	76 Kasavaṇampaṭṭi	124 Swāmithōppu
30 Pachaiappa College	77 Sennimalai	125 Thattagiri
31 Elumbūr (Egmore)	78 Gōvindapuram	126 Paḷaṇi
32 Purasaivākkam	79 Kaḷiyakkāvilai	127 Tiruvennainallūr
33 Tiru. Vi. Ka. Nagar	80 Kalavai	128 Vēṭṭaikāranputhūr
34 Vyāsarpādi	81 Gōvindavādi	129 Pudukōṭṭai
35 Rāyapuram	82 Kāñchipuram	130 Aṇimalam Village
36 Thōṇḍiārpēt	83 Appūr	131 Vadukapaṭṭi
37 Mount Road,	84 Vellārai village	132 Rājapālayam
Chennai	85 Śriperumbudūr	133 Sathirapaṭṭi
38 Villivākkam	86 Karūr	134 Ekkākudi near
39 Red Hills	87 Nērūr	Utharakōsamaṅgai
40 Rāyapēṭṭah	88 Paśuvanthaṇai	135 Rāmēśwaram
41 Mylāpūr	89 Ūthupaṭṭi	136 Salem
42 Tiruṇiṇḍravūr	90 Kaḷugumalai	137 Kañjamalai
43 Gūduvāñchērry	91 Kumbakōṇam	138 Skandāśramam
44 Thakkōlam	92 Āthanūr	139 Jagirammaipālayam
45 Peruṅgulathūr	93 Tiruvalaṅgādu	140 Saṅkaran Kōil
46 Maṇṇivākkam	94 Tirupuvaṇam	141 Paṇaiyūr
47 Naṅganallūr	95 Swāmimalai	142 Thāṇipārai
48 Vepēry	96 Āduthurai	143 Kōṭṭayūr

144	Siṅgampun̄ari	176	Paḷamadai	209	Kāramadai
145	Māṇamadurai	177	Nettūr	210	Śrīmuśṇam
146	Śrīvilliputhūr	178	Vallanādu	211	Tiruvathigai
147	Tiruvaiyāru	179	Athimūr	212	Tirumāṇikuḷi
148	Pūṇḍi (Taṇjāvūr)	180	Dēsūr	213	Kaṇṇivādi
149	Tiruvidaimaruthūr	181	Trichy	214	Māṇūr
150	Muḷiyār	182	Pin̄ṇa Vāsai	215	Śivaṇmalai
151	Kaṇjanūr	183	Kāṭṭuputhūr	216	Aritāpaṭṭi
152	Karanthai	184	Perambalūr	217	Tiruchenkōdu
153	Kaduveli	185	Senthuṛai	218	Aḷagarkōil
154	Tenkāsi	186	Śrī Raṅgam	219	Tiruvattāru
155	Tirumalaikōil	187	Mudivaithānēndal	220	Reddiāpaṭṭi
156	Pranūr	188	Vilāthikuḷam	221	Kollimalai
157	Kuṭṭrālam	189	Vaḷḷiyūr	222	Sathuragiri
158	Kadayanallūr	190	Nallān Paṭṭarai	223	Chettavarai
159	Paṭṭukottai	191	Saidāpēt	224	Thēṇi
160	Tillaivilāgam	192	Vēlūr Cantt	225	Paṇṇimalai
161	Vēṭṭavalam	193	Vaḷḷimalai	226	Tāndikudi
162	Avalūrpēṭṭai	194	Vēlūr	227	Āyakudi
163	Tiruvaṇṇāmalai	195	Kaṇṇamaṅgalam	228	Maṇjakuppam
164	Pōlūr	196	Thāṅgal	229	Parvathamalai
165	Pūṇḍi	197	Kāṅgēyanallūr	230	Auroville
(Tiruvaṇṇāmalai)		198	Pasumāthūr	231	Irumbai
166	Puthūr (Tiruvārūr)	199	Tiruvallam	232	Mailam
167	Naṇṇilam	200	Mailam	233	Moratāṇḍi
168	Sanna Nallur	201	Tiruvakarai	234	Nilakōṭṭai
169	Maṇṇārkudi	202	Tiruvāmāthūr	235	Āḷvar Tirungari
170	Seṅgalipuram	203	Tirukōilūr	236	TirukkuruṅKudi
171	Tiruvārūr	204	Āṇḍimaḍam	237	Tiruparappu
172	Kulasēkarapatṇam	205	Viruthāchalam	238	Puḷiyaṅkudi
173	Eral	206	Ūthiyūr	239	Maruthūr
174	Tiruchendūr	207	Vēḷḷiaṅgiri	240	Puthēri
175	Pēṭṭai	208	Marudamalai	241	Thāṇthōṇṇimalai

MAP-3: Distribution of Celebrated Siddha Centres in Puducherry Region



Legend for the Puducherry Map

- | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 Puducherry | 11 Sultānpēt | 22 Sōmpaṭṭu |
| 2 Karuvadi Kuppam | 12 Villianur | (Maṇṇādipaṭṭu) |
| 3 Sithankudi | 13 Kaṇuvāpēt | 23 Bommiyārpālayam |
| 4 Kāramaṇikuppam | 14 Ariyūr | 24 Mudaliārpēt |
| 5 Ellaipillaichāvadi | 15 Ēmbalam | 25 Pākkamudaiyānpēt |
| 6 Chiṇṇa Bābu | 16 Kathirkāmam | 26 Satyānagar |
| Samudram | 17 Gōrimēdu | 27 Maṇakuḷa Viṇāyagar |
| 7 Arumāthapuram | 18 Kambalikārankupam | Temple |
| 8 Nallāthūr | 19 Thennampākkam | 28 Odiyampaṭṭu |
| 9 Kaṇḍamaṅgalam | 20 Vaithikuppam | 29 Vīrāmpaṭṭiṇam |
| 10 Pillaiyārkuppam | 21 Tirukāñji | |

Chapter V

CONCLUSION

The Tamil Siddhas variously described as atheist, anti-casteists, anti-establishment and radical, gained immense popularity amongst all sections of the society through their literary compositions, some of which became household names for their preaching about morals, simple life and teaching many complex philosophical issues in a lucid language focusing on the do's and don'ts in everyday life of a common man. Their religious ideas and philosophical tenets, rituals and practices were also presented in the simplest possible language which even a layman can read and understand but the shrouded inner meaning can only be unveiled by those who are familiar with the mythology, ritualistic methods and practices of various sectarian faiths such as *Śaivism*, *Śaktism* and above all *Tāntrism*. Their contribution for the social cohesion and communal harmony can also be juxtaposed with their contributions to alchemical medicine and surgery. The *Siddha Vaidyam* is aimed towards the building up of an ageless and strong physical body (*Siddha-dēha*) through which they attained *jīvan mukti*.

Thus, they are not only striving to eradicate social maladies such as caste, communal and gender distinctions, religious dogmos and meaningless rituals, but also curing the mundane physical ailments such that he/she can become the personification of physical and mental strength useful to work for the common well-being.

Belonging to the popular genre of regional identity, the Tamil Siddhas were projected as the symbols of Tamil glory. But except their linguistic style which is the spoken language of the masses, their ideas, theoretical concepts, methods and practices are part of a pan-Indian complex whole which included *Vēdic*, *avaidic*, *yōgic* and *tāntric* elements of diverse sectarian faiths.

Although they are mentioned as a group of 'eighteen', there was no single established list and we have Siddhas grouped under 'nine' and 'eighteen' (*Navanāthas* and *Pathiṇeṇ Siddhars*). Those who wrote on the Tamil Siddha groups included the sacred sites, the local spiritual masters as well as those part of the pan-Indian traditions. Even those Nāthas and Siddhas of the pan-Indian traditions (*Minanātha* and *Gorakṣanatha* for example), were Tamilised and credited with an

extensive literary contribution in Tamil, whereas they are credited with many works in Sanskrit in their places of origin, the Eastern India.

Coming to the native Tamil Siddhas themselves both in the traditions of *Navanāthas* and *Pathinēṇ Siddhas*, more than two of them have the same name who can be differentiated by a critical analysis of their literary style and expression. To cite a few of the popular names such as Agastiyar, Paṭṭiṇathar, Avvaiyār, Pulipāṇi, Karuvūrār etc., whose literary contributions were critically studied and analysed reveal that they belonged to different individuals of the same names. Because of this reason, the chronology of the Tamil Siddhas remained a hotly debated one, which is said to have begun from a very remote past of the pre-Mauryan era in dynastic terms to as late as the 17th-18th centuries C.E., and beyond.

Thus, the history of the Tamil Siddhas extending over a period of nearly 2300 years is glorified as one of the glorious epochs of Tamil civilization which preached equality, rationalism, brotherhood, communal harmony, social awakening, and practical methods of physical and mental awakening. But as seen in the previous chapters the Tamil Siddhas at any point of their long history extending over two millennia identified themselves as part of the “Tamil Culture”. Their preaching consisting of *yōga sādhana* such as *yōgāsanas*, *siddha-dēha*, mythical principles, rational thinking and outlook, avoidance of dogmatic ideals, are part of their contributions at the mundane level to the society at large.

There are some Siddhas who glorified Śiva, Śakti, Muruga and to some extent Gaṇeśa, as gods *par-excellence* who can be visualised and experienced through variety of *yōgic* exercises and absolute faith, devotion and surrender. They recommended a strong physical body perfected through yogic exercises and invigourised with alchemical drugs (*siddha-dēha*), which as a vehicle can lead the individual to ultimate liberation with in this world (*jīvan mukti*) as opposed to the Brahmanic ideology of *mokṣa* or deliverance. It is the writings of this group of the Tamil/ non-Tamil Siddhas that we have all the elements of *Tāntric* religion given the greatest elaboration.

In the history of medieval South India, the Vijayanagara period marks the consolidation of a plethora of ideas, cults, rituals, sectarian faiths, belief systems and

social institutions culminating in the emergence of a highly standardized and segmented kinship of an egalitarian society consisting of a variety of languages, social and professional groups and highly codified and dogmatic sectarian religions. From such disparate components of social, cultural, economic and religious identity, the institution of temple (which emerged as the greatest contribution of the Bhakti movement in South India of 7th–11th centuries C.E.), becomes an institution itself during the Vijayanagara period which acted as a nerve centre of all activities of the society. It is this institution of temple, through which the ruling and the priestly sections of the society mediated their ideologies and powers, brought about the amalgamation of all the sections of the society into the arena of personal and spiritual elevation and emancipation. The Vijayanagara rulers took up the temple building as a tool and method to consolidate divergent linguistic regions under the ambit of a centralized power. In this process, the sculptural art received great royal patronage which created an elaborate mythology and iconography for all the sectarian groups occupying different parts of the empire.

Among the sculptural productions of the Vijayanagara period, the representation of the Nātha Siddhas and associated *Tāntric* symbolism received very little attention from the scholarly world. Brushed aside as mere decorative motifs, the representations of the Nātha Siddhas, *yōgic* exercises, *tāntric* symbols and iconography offers a virgin area of research.

As discussed in the previous chapters, the Siddha Nātha cult primarily advocating the path of *yōga* can be seen in its embryonic form from the later *Vēdic* times. *Atharvanavēda* is full of magical performances, sorcery, witch-craft, animal sacrifices and so on which were not part of the traditional patriarchal *vēdic* society. The greatest contribution of the ancient Indian wisdom to the humanity at a large is *yōga*. In *tāntrism*, the human body acquires an importance it had never before attained in the spiritual history of India. The body is no longer the source of pain, but the most reliable and effective instrument for conquering death. Since liberation is to be achieved in this life itself (*jīyanmukti*), the body must be preserved as long as possible, and in perfect condition as an aid to meditation¹. Attainment of supernatural powers by having control over breathing and other sensory perceptions became the

¹ Mircea Eliade, *Yoga: immortality and Freedom*, p.227.

corner stone of yogic practice which soon developed into a systematised whole, permeating from the teacher to the disciple. The teacher who excelled himself as *yōgic* practitioner is divinized and by 9th century C.E., the *Guru-Siśya parampara* of Nātha Siddhas emerged as the most popular sectarian faith of a pan-Indian dimension.

The Nātha Siddha philosophical tenets and ritual practices, absorbed many of their counterparts from such divergent sects as Ajvikas, Pāśupatas, Kāpālikas, Kālamukhas, Buddhist Sahajiyas, Bauls and many other minor belief systems and became a 'syncretic religion' unto itself, yet preserving all such earlier manifestations. By 15th century despite its diminished strength in terms of sectarian literary output, the Nātha-Siddha cult gains much vigour on the popular front entering the folklore, fables, legends and songs of popular genre giving the Nātha Siddha cult a truly pan-Indian colour and character.

The Navanāthas of the Śaivite pantheon and eighty-four Siddhas of the (Vajrayāna) Buddhist pantheon were part of such syncretic religion which profoundly influenced the personal and social life, moral outlook, literature, songs and poetry, religious, philosophical methods and practices and above all the very outlook of the individual in term of introspection. Nātha-Siddha cult with its emphasis on *haṭha-yōga* aimed at elevating the mankind as a whole irrespective of the distinctions of caste, colour, creed, faith, gender and profession. It was in the Nātha Siddha philosophy and cult that we notice the efflorescence of *Tāntrism* in all its strength. *Yōgic* exercises being a part of it, *tāntric* philosophy, ideology and ritualistic practices equated sexual act on par with *yōgic* exercises, thereby allowing the enjoyment of the latent and inherent sexual pleasures also towards attaining the ultimate stage of the *tāntric sādhana* of becoming a *paramahamsa*².

As discussed in these previous chapters, the sculptural art of the south Indian temples up to 13th century was more agamic and scriptural in content, consisting of the representation of gods and goddesses only. The establishment of Muslim empires in south India resulted in the decline of the temple building activity on the one hand

² In the sculptural art of Śrisailem in Āndhra Pradesh, in one of the representations of sexual act a *hamsa* (swan) is shown symbolically indicating the underlying meaning of the *Kaulācara* sexual ideals. The *tāntric* understanding of sex begins with the full acceptance of the orthodox Hindu presumption of *kāma* for the pursuit of pleasure and a wide variety of magical powers.

and systematic defecation and destruction of existing temples by the invading forces on the other.

The establishment of the Vijayanagara Empire marks a golden age in terms of temple construction, renovation and expansion; phenomenal growth of sculptural iconography; assimilation of diverse sectarian faiths of popular genre into the elite religious philosophy and ritual paraphernalia. As a result we notice the growth of temple cities in every nook and corner of the empire each having its own legendary history and sectarian literary productions. The temples were provided with daily, weekly, fortnightly, monthly, quarterly, half-yearly and annual fairs, festivals and rituals making it the busiest social institution of the contemporary society.

Extending over four linguistic zones of south India, the Vijayanagara Empire made it a royal policy to include in the temple iconography and sculpture, the gods, goddesses religious teachers, mendicants and sages and symbolism of all the sectarian faiths. Tantric iconography represents a religious universe that must be 'entered' and 'assimilated'. This entrance and assimilation are to be understood in the direct meaning of the terms. In meditating an icon, one must first transport oneself to the cosmic plane ruled by that particular divinity and assimilate it with the sacred force of the same visualized within the physical body. The visualization of a divine image is followed by the identification of oneself with that divinity³.

Although we have stray evidences of their individual sculptural representations of a couple of Nātha-Siddhas in south western Āndhra region, patronization of a Nātha Siddha temple in the Karnāṭaka region by the Cōḷā emperor and the existence of the Mūlanātha temple at Bāhūr during the pre-Vijayanagara period, the cult of Navanāthas seems to have become a state religion by the Vijayanagara period. The appearance of the Navanāthas in the Vijayanagara sculptural art marks one of the significant developments in terms of patronization of a cult which has lost its popularity and strength by that period. During the Vijayanagara period, the Navanātha cult seems to have been revived by the inclusion of many local Nātha-Siddha teachers as part of the cult. Sculptural representations in the form of

³ Mircea Ellaide, *Op.cit.*, p. 207-08.

miniature low relief engravings of Nātha Siddhas of the Navanātha lineage becomes the hall mark of the Vijayanagara temple iconography.

Cutting across sectarian differences, almost all the medieval temple during 14th-17th Centuries C.E., were embellished with hundreds of representation of Navanāthas, *yōgic* exercises, erotic sculptures, *tāntric* symbols and rituals. All of them are intimately connected to each other in the sense that the Navanāthas are shown performing *yōgic* exercises (*āsanās*), Siddhas and Siddha practitioners involved in sexual acts. Representations of *tāntric* rituals like *Bhairavi cakra* / *Cakra Pūjā*, etc. in the same panels are similar to the representations of Navanāthas. Previous researches did not give the due importance to the study of Nātha Siddha cult in South India, their sculptural representation, in Vijayanagara art and the proliferation of the Siddha Cult in the Vijayanagara and post Vijayanagara art of Tamiḷnādu. Previous researchers did not focused much on these sculptural representations which were identified as the images of ascetics/*yōgis* on different animals.

Looking at the philosophical, literary and ritual context of the Tamiḷ Siddhas and their *tāntric* leanings, the study of the sculptural representations of Navanāthas of South India in general and Tamiḷnādu in particular, have brought out many interesting dimensions of the Siddha Cult in this part of the subcontinent.

The occurrence of Navanāthas as a group in two temple of Karnāṭaka at Ulsūr and Kalāsipāḷyam provided the initial platform to identify the Navanātha iconography and its other dimensions across the Vijayanagara and post Vijayanagara temples of South India. Besides these examples in stone medium, the post Vijayanagara temples contain some unique sculptural additions in stucco medium representing Nātha-Siddhas and other *Tāntric* ritual representations. The Vijayanagara sculptors, appears to have a thorough knowledge of the literary description of the Navanāthas, their ritual attributes and appendages such as the garlands of *ṛudrākṣas*, *karṇakuṇḍalas* of the same, woolen *yagñōpavīta*, bell, the magical wallet, *laṅgōti* etc. Another important attribute which is referred to in the description of Nāthas and even

Kāpālikas is, in a dirty patched garment⁴, which could be a garment in the shape of a long gown, stitched by hand using different pieces of cloth. The Vijayanagara sculptors also tried to show this patched garment and were successful also. All the Navanātha sculptures contain circular and oval double lines at the shoulder and chest level so as to show the patches of the garment. They represented them as riding animals or the reptiles, the names of which when prefixed to the Nātha-Siddhas help us in identifying in the actual *Navanāthas*. The literary description of the Navanāthas culled from across the country helped us to differentiate between the representations of *divine Navanāthas* from ordinary practitioners or *Nāthapanthis*.

The study of the literary descriptions of the sectarian groups of Śaivism starting from the Lakulisas, Pāśupatas, Kāpālikas and Kālamukhas, has shown that but for minor differences, all of them had many common features in terms of teachers, philosophy, rituals and practices, personal attributes and appendages. These common features such as *yōga-daṇḍa*, *yōga-paṭṭa*, *loṅgala* (wooden shaft), deer horn medallion, patched coat, woolen band of *yagñōpavīta*, *laṅgōti*, stringed musical instrument (*kiṇjuri*), rosary garland (*rudrākṣamāla*) on various parts of the body, bangle like rings on the arms and wrists possibly made of copper.

In this research work, these ritual appendages on the *Navanātha* sculptural representations are identified for the first time corroborated by literary descriptions. Besides these Navanātha representations, there are equal numbers of interesting sculptures showing various yogic postures which are also part of the Nātha Siddha emphasis on *yōga-sādhana*. In these representations, the *yōga-daṇḍa* and the *yōga-paṭṭa* are shown as the tools with which, they maintained their static posture (*āsanā*) in the process of *prāṇāyāma*. The *yōga-daṇḍa* is a short wooden piece to facilitate the resting of the hand in a particular *hastamudrā*, as noticed in the Śrisailam examples (Figs.2&3). There are many of representation of the *yōgic* postures performed by the *sādhakas* seated on this thin *yōga-daṇḍa* at Śrisailam. The same *yōga-daṇḍa* get transformed like a wooden table in the Villianūr temple sculptures, on which the

⁴ One of the popular Tamiḷ Siddhas, Paṭṭiṇathār also described the appearance of the Siddhas in one of his songs :they will wander in the forest surviving on breathing without taking any solid food, they wander by wearing the patched garment and they will carry the begging bowl in their hand. (*Kāḍē Tirindheṇṇā, Kārṇē pusitheṇṇā, Kantai Karṇi yōḍē yeduthēṇṇā?*....) Here the term ‘*Kantai*’ refers to the patched garment. See *Paṭṭiṇathār Songs, Nāṅgām* (4th) *Kacchi Tiru Akaval; on Tiruvidaimarutūr*, Verse. No. 1

ascetics are shown meditating in a variety of yogic postures. The representation of antler horn, on the bodies of Navanāthas which was wrongly identified as *gañja* smoking pipes (chillums) was also explained on the basis of literary descriptions.

Another interesting facet in the Navanātha sculptures is their appearance on the Vaiṣṇava temple in association with *tāntric* iconography and sexual symbols. Two of the Navanāthas, *Matśya* and *Varāha* were given importance. In all probability they might have been taken as the incarnations of the Viṣṇu (*Matśyāvatāra* and *Varāhāvatāra*). Another interesting dimension of the representations of Mīṇanātha, the founder of the *Kaulācāra* is found as performing complex *yōgāsanās* (Fig. 28, 36), playing musical instrument (Fig.26, 29) and dancing with the musical instrument (Fig.44). This is a contrast to the literary descriptions of the Mīṇanātha and his sexual orgies.

Besides these Navanātha representations, the Vaiṣṇava temples of Tamiḷnādu contain (For eg. Tiruvaṭṭāru, Susīndram) interesting representation of *yōgāsanās* performed by sexually aroused *sādhakas* which might be showing the underlying philosophy of sex rites as well as *prāṇāyāma* playing the same role in the attainment of *siddha-dēha* or *jīvan mukti*.

Bhairavi cakra also known as *Cakra pūjā* is the most important sculptural representation identified in this work, in the art of the Vijayanagara temples. This *tāntric* ritual received greatest elaboration in many *tāntric* literary works but its sculptural manifestation, has not so far been identified by any of the previous researchers. Appearing in the early Vijayanagara art of Śrisailam (where Bhairavi is shown in a seated posture) this *tāntric* ritual showing a nude female surrounded by ithyphallic *sādhakas* is found very prominently represented in both the Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava temples of Tamiḷnādu and other parts of South India. The same representation continued in the stucco medium on the *gōpura/vimāna* of temples which indicate the importance of the *tāntric* ritual during that particular period (Figs.148-162).

The historical continuity of the Siddha Cult in Tamiḷnādu also show that the philosophical, *yōgic* and *tāntric* elements of the medieval age continued into the present century, where the modern Siddhas were believed and worshiped for their

miraculous powers which is manifested in the *samādhi* worship of such liberated souls. Despite the growth of sanskritised Hindu forms of worship, the Siddha Cult continued to attract millions of devotees yearning for their physical and spiritual emancipation. Being rooted in the mundane popular belief system, the Siddha Cult continues its uninterrupted and glorious existence of more than 2000 years. The historical antiquity of the Nātha Siddha tradition as also Tamil Siddha tradition has been the topic of debate. The Navanāthas and Eighty-four Siddhas were identified as belonging to the medieval period between 9th to 12th centuries, but the popular beliefs as enshrined in the literary compositions credit the Nātha Siddhas to have a deathless existence. Hence in this work, we have not touched the complex and controversial issue of chronology of Navanāthas.

Similarly in the case of Tamil Siddhas also, scholars like Kamil Zvelabil, R. Venkataraman, M. Arunachalam, etc. discussed the issue of chronology of the Tamil Siddhas. The literary analysis of the Tamil Siddha works has shown that they cannot be ascribed to a single individual, but different persons of the same name are responsible for such literary composition and as such we have focused mainly on the philosophical, ritual and methodological part of the Tamil Siddha literary production than on the issues of their antiquity and chronological position.

To conclude, this research on the Siddha Cult of Tamilnādu: Its history and historical continuity, for the first time cleared some of the misconceptions about the Tamil Siddhas. Contrary to the common belief and understanding, that the Tamil Siddhas are unique and peculiar to this region in terms of their anti-casteist, anti-establishment and rational outlook, it has been shown that they are part of the pan-Indian Nātha-Siddha philosophy, ideology, rituals and practices. In their writings also, they never identified themselves with “the Tamil culture/language/ region”. As emphasized earlier in the previous chapters, they preached the *yōgic* path to see the god within oneself to elevate the individual to the stage of *jīvan-mukta*. Different groups of Tamil Siddhas are also part of the pan-Indian traditions of alchemy and *tāntric* philosophy. Apart from that, the Tamil Siddhas are popularly known for their excellent knowledge of human anatomy, functioning of various nerve plexus within the human body, the common ailments and acute diseases that one comes across and the herbal preparations to cure all the diseases from simple to complex. Thus the

Siddha Cult in Tamiḷnādu as a part of the pan-Indian tradition has been catering to the spiritual and physical needs of the popular masses making it a truly Indian tradition.

In contrast to the post-Vijayanagara, modern and contemporary Tamil Siddha philosophy, these sculptural art of the Vijayanagara and Nāyaka periods in Tamilnadu contain such a wide variety and numerous representations of the Nātha-Siddhas, *yōgic* exercises and *tāntric* sexual art representations which are not be found in any other part of South India. As seen before, the Nātha-Siddhas tradition of Western India became popular by 11th -12th centuries, in Karnāṭaka and Āndhra regions and enters Tamiḷ region after 14th century. Yet, these sculptural representations contain the greatest variety of Nātha-Siddha philosophy, ideology, ritual practices, *yōgic* exercises and sexual symbolism. Even Mīṇanātha and Gōrakṣanātha were absorbed into the native tradition of the ‘Eighteen Siddhas’ as Macchamuṇi and Gōrakkar, while latter is credited to some literary composition in the Tamiḷ also and there are many *Siddha-Kṣētras* in Tamiḷnādu which are identified as the *Samādhi-kṣētras* of the Gōrakhnāth. Except the usage of the *pañca-dravyas*, the remaining features of the pan-Indian Nātha-Siddha tradition can be observed in the Tamiḷ Siddhas’ philosophy and practices. Being associated with the popular masses, the Tamiḷ Siddhas could survive into the contemporary society and able to attract ardent devotion of the people.

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Appendix -1

Different List of Navanāthas and Eighteen Siddhas

List of Nava Nāthas in Gourana's *Nava Nātha Charitra* (Telugu)

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Mīṇanātha /Matsyēndranātha | 6. Siddha Nāgārjuna |
| 2. Chaurāṅgi/Jalandhara | 7. Khanikanātha |
| 3. Gōrakṣanātha | 8. Mañjunātha |
| 4. Virupākṣa nātha | 9. Buddha Siddha / Vyāli Siddha |
| 5. Mēghanātha | |

Source: Chandramouli, N., *Tantric Symbols in the Art of Srisailam*, paper presented in National Seminar on Tantrism, Osmania University, Hyderabad, 2002.

List of Navanāthas in *Gorakhnāth and the Kānphata Yogis* by G. W. Briggs

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------|
| 1. Gōrakṣanātha | 6. Gōpinātha |
| 2. Matsyendranātha | 7. Prāṇanātha |
| 3. Carpatanātha | 8. Suratanātha |
| 4. Maṅgalanātha | 9. Cambanātha |
| 5. Ghugonātha | |

Source: G. W. Briggs, *Gorakhnāth and the Kānphata Yogis*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1938, p. 136

List of Navanātha Siddhas as per *Lexicon of Tamil Literature*

1. Cattiyanātar
2. Catōkanātar
3. Ātinātar
4. Ānātinātar
5. Vekulinātar
6. Mataṅkanātar
7. Maccēntiranātar
8. Katēntiranātar
9. Kōrakanātar

Source: Kamil V. Zvelebil, *Lexicon of Tamil Literature*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1995, pp. 165-66 (spellings as used by the author)

Lists of Navanāthas found in some Tamil Works

Sl.No	by Tāyumāṇavar	by Tirumūlar	Other Works	by others
1	Satyanātha	Sanagar	Sathuvanātha	Kadēndirar
2	Satōganātha	Sanandanar	Sarloganātha	Gōrakkar
3	Vagulinātha	Sanādanar	Ādinātha	Koṇṇaṇar
4	Madaṅganātha	Sanaṅkumārār	Aruḷinātha	Nāgārjunar
5	Matśyēndranātha	Śivayōgamāmuni	Madaṅganātha	Matśyēndirar
6	Kadēndranātha	Patañjali	Matśyēndranātha	Bīmanāthar
7	Ādinātha	Vyāghrapādar	Kadayēndranātha	Aruṇagirināthar
8	Anāthinātha	Tirumūlar	Gōrakhanātha	Bhujāṅga Gurunāthar
9	Gōrakhanātha			

Source: Ganamanjari Sambathkumar, *Śivamayam Kaṇḍa Siddhargal*, Sri Indhu Publications, Chennai, 2008, (appendix)

A General List of 18 Tamil Siddhas

- | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| 1. Nandi | 7. Iḍaikāḍar | 13. Aḷugaṇṇar |
| 2. Aḡaṣṭiyar | 8. Bōgar | 14. Agapēy |
| 3. Tirumūlar | 9. Pulikkēsiyār | 15. Pāmpāṭṭi |
| 4. Puṇṇākīsar | 10. Karuvūrār | 16. Tēraiyaṇ |
| 5. Pulathiyar | 11. Koṇṇaṇar | 17. Kudambai |
| 6. Pūṇaikkaṇṇar | 12. Kālaṅgi | 18. Saṭṭai Siddhar |

Source: Ganamanjari Sambathkumar, *Śivamayam Kaṇḍa Siddhargal*, Sri Indhu Publications, Chennai, 2008, (appendix)

List of 18 Tamil Siddhars as per Aḡaṣṭya's Sowmiya Sāgaram 1200

- | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. Saṭṭaimuni | 8. Tirumūlar | 15. Aḷugaṇṇar |
| 2. Sundaramūrti | 9. Bōgar | 16. Thoḷugaṇṇar |
| 3. Brahmariṣi | 10. Koṇṇaṇar | 17. Emanāṭṭu |
| 4. Sorubānandar | 11. Puṇṇākkīsar | Siddhar |
| 5. Jothimuni | 12. Matśyamuni | 18. Gōrakkar |
| 6. Vēdavyāsar | 13. Karuvūrār | |
| 7. Parāsarar | 14. Iḍaikāḍar | |

Source: Ganamanjari Sambathkumar, *Śivamayam Kaṇḍa Siddhargal*, Sri Indhu Publications, Chennai, 2008, (appendix)

Abithama Sindāmaṇi

- | | | |
|------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Agastyar | 7. Nandi | 13. Kamalamuṇi |
| 2. Bōgar | 8. Kūṇkaṇṇar | 14. Iḍaikā dar |
| 3. Gōrakkar | 9. Koṅgaṇar | 15. Puṇṇākkī sar |
| 4. Kailāsanāthar | 10. Matśyamūṇi | 16. Sundarānandar |
| 5. Saṭṭaimuṇi | 11. Vāsamuṇi | 17. Rōmamuṇi |
| 6. Tirumūlar | 12. Kūrmamuṇi | 18. Brahmamuṇi |

Source: Ganamanjari Sambathkumar, *Śivamayam Kaṇḍa Siddhargal*, Sri Indhu Publications, Chennai, 2008, (appendix)

Classification of Tamil Siddhas by Zvelebil in the *Lexicon of Tamil Literature*

Tamil Cittars	Semi-legendry persons	Poets included in Siddhas group
Akattiyar	Taṇvantiri	Akappēycittar
Pōkar	Pulaṣṭiyar	Aḷukuṇicittar
Kōrakkar	Pusuṇtar	Śivavākkīyar
Kailācanātar	Karuvūrār	Ēnāticcittar
Caṭṭaimuṇi	Irāmatēvar	Iḍaikkāṭṭucittar
Tirumūlar	Tēraiyyar	Kāḷaicittar
Nanti	Kapilar	Kaḍuvelicittar
Kūṇkaṇṇar		Kutampaiccittar
Macchamuṇi		Pāmpāṭṭiccittar
Vācamuṇi		Paṭṭiṇattār
Kūrmamuṇi		Pattirakiri
Kamalamuṇi		
Iḍaikkātar		
Puṇṇākkīcar		
Suntarānantar		
Urōmariṣi		
Piramamuṇi		

Source: Kamil V. Zvelebil, *Lexicon of Tamil Literature*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1995, pp. 165-66. (the above spellings of the names are given as used by the author in his works)

Siddha Vaithya books in Tamil

- | | | |
|---------------------------|----------------|---------------|
| 1. Kōthamar/
Gowthamar | 7. Rōmar | 14. Pulathiar |
| 2. Agastyar | 8. Pusundar | 15. Karuvūrār |
| 3. Saṅgarar | 9. Saṭṭaimuṇi | 16. Koṅganar |
| 4. Vairavan | 10. Nandīsar | 17. Bōgar |
| 5. Mārkaṇḍar | 11. Tirumūlar | 18. Pulipāṇi |
| 6. Vānmīgar | 12. Kālaṅgi | |
| | 13. Maṭṣyamūṇi | |

Source: Gānamañjari Sambathkumar, *Śivamayam Kaṇḍa Siddhargal*, Sri Indhu Publications, Chennai, 2008, (appendix)

List of Siddhars, their tradition and the place they attained their *Samādhi*

Name	Tradition	Place of <i>Samādhi</i>
1. Agathiyar	Vellālar	Anantha Sayanam
2. Agapēy	Vellālar	Aḷagar Malai
3. Aḷugannar	Chinese Carpenter	Aḷagar Malai
4. Iḍaikātar	Shepherd	Tiruvaṇṇāmalai
5. Kamalamūṇi	Uvachhar	Tiruvārūr
6. Karuvūrār	Smith	Karuvūr
7. Kālaṅgināthar	Chinese Carpenter	Kāñchipuram
8. Kudambai	Shepherd	Māyuram
9. Koṅgaṇavar	Kannada Shepherd	Tirupathi
10. Gōrakkar	Kaḷḷar	Pērūr (Coimbatore)
11. Saṭṭanāthar	Sinhalese	Śriraṅgam
12. Sundarānandar	Vellālar	Madurai
13. Daṇvantri	Gurukkal	Vaithīśvaran Koil
14. Tirumūlar	Vellālar	Tillai (Chidambaram)
15. Tēraiyar	Brahmin	Pothigai Hills
16. Nandhi	Brahmin	Kāsi
17. Patañjali	Kaḷḷar	Rāmēśvaram
18. Pāmpāṭṭi	Gosayi	Virudhāchalam
19. Puṇṇakkīsar	Kannada Shepherd	Nāṅgunēri
20. Pulasthiyar	Sinhalese	Yālpānām
21. Pūṇaikkaṇṇar	Egyptian	Egypt
22. Bōgar	Chinese Potter	Paḷaṇi
23. Macchamūṇi	Fisherman	Tiruparaṅkuṇḍaram
24. Vāmadēvar	Ōdhuvār	Aḷagar Malai
25. Vānmīgar	Hunter	Ettikudi

Source: Aru. Ramanathan, *Siddhar Pātalkal*, Prema Pirasuram, Chennai, 1959

List found in the Tamil work ‘Nam Nāṭṭu Siddhargal’

- | | | |
|---------------|--------------------|----------------|
| 1. Agastyar | 10. Kāgapusundar | 18. Tirumūlar |
| 2. Agapēy | 11. Kudambai | 19. Tēraiyar |
| 3. Aḷuganni | 12. Koṅgaṇar | 20. Nandi |
| 4. Iḍaikādar | 13. Gōrakkar | 21. Pāmbāṭṭi |
| 5. Rāmadēvar | 14. Saṭṭaimuṇi | 22. Pulathiyar |
| 6. Rāmaliṅgar | 15. Śivavākkiyar | 23. Pulipāṇi |
| 7. Rōmamuṇi | 16. Daṇvantri | 24. Bōgar |
| 8. Kabilar | 17. Tirumālīgaidēv | 25. Matsyamuṇi |
| 9. Karuvūrār | ar | |

Source: Manickavasagam, R., *Namnāṭṭu Siddhargal*, 1978

List of Eighteen Siddhars by Na. Muthiah

- | | | |
|------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Agastiyar | 7. Nandi | 13. Kamalamuṇi |
| 2. Bōgar | 8. Kūnkaṇṇar | 14. Iḍaikādar |
| 3. Gōrakkar | 9. Koṅgaṇar | 15. Puṇṇakkīsar |
| 4. Kailāsanāthar | 10. Macchamuṇi | 16. Sundarānandar |
| 5. Saṭṭaimuṇi | 11. Vāsamuṇi | 17. Rōmariṣi |
| 6. Tirumūlar | 12. Kūrmamuṇi | 18. Bhiramamuṇi |

Source: Na. Muthiah, *Eelathu Siththargal* (Mystics of Sri Lanka), (Tamil), Kumaran Publishers, Chennai, 1994

Siddhar Periya Gñānakōvai and Deva Mohini Ūrvasi's Siddha Vaithiya Sitka

- | | | |
|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Kālaṅgi | 15. Vaṣistar | 28. Kūnkaṇṇar |
| 2. Kalasanāthar | 16. Kowsigar | 29. Kaduveli |
| 3. Kamalamuṇi | 17. Brahmamuṇi | 30. Rōmarishi |
| 4. Yūgimuṇi | 18. Vyāsar | 31. Pusundar |
| 5. Karuṇanandar | 19. Daṇvantri | 32. Parāsar |
| 6. Bōgamuṇi | 20. Sattaimuṇi | 33. Tēraiyar |
| 7. Saṭṭaināthar | 21. Puṇṇākīsar | 34. Pulathiyar |
| 8. Patañjali | 22. Nandīsar | 35. Sundarānandar |
| 9. Gōrakkar | 23. Agapēy / | 36. Tirumūlar |
| 10. Bavanandīsar | Agappai | 37. Karuvūrār |
| 11. Pulipāṇi | 24. Koṅgaṇavar | 38. Śivavākiyar |
| 12. Aḷuganni | 25. Matsyamuṇi | 39. Toḷugaṇṇar |
| 13. Pāmbāṭṭi | 26. Gurubādar | 40. Navanāthar |
| 14. Iḍaikādar | 27. Barathuvasar | |

Source: Ganamanjari Sambathkumar, *Śivamayam Kaṇḍa Siddhargal*, Sri Indhu Publications, Chennai, 2008

Gānamañjari Sambathkumar, Śivamayam Kaṇḍa Siddhargal

1. Agastiyar
2. Bōgar
3. Kāgapusundar
4. Rōmamuṇi
5. Sri Vallaba / Sundarāṇandar
6. Kālaṅgināthar
7. Nandhīsar
8. Koṅgaṇar
9. Saṭṭai Muṇi
10. Yāgōpu/ Rāmadēvar
11. Gōrakkar
12. Matśyamuṇi
13. Karuvūrār
14. Pinnākīsar
15. Śivavākiyar
16. Prāndar
17. Agapēy
18. Tēraiyar
19. Pāmpāṭṭi
20. Kudambai
21. Pulipāṇi
22. Aḷugaṇi
23. Kalluli
24. Kamalamuṇi
25. Thirumūlar
26. Patañjali
27. Śri Palguni Rudra Siddhar
28. Pon Muthiraiyar/
Śri Swarṇa Bairavar
29. Śri Natana Gōpāla Nāyaki
Sāmigaḷ
30. Savalikē Śivaliṅgēśvara Siddhar
31. Pasumādathu Kōṇār Siddhar
32. Pulathiyar
33. Śri Pōdo Siddhar Gñāni
34. Tirukōilūr Jadāmudi Thambirān
Siddhar
35. Vēppilai Kaṭṭi Siddhar
36. Kollar Gōpuram Kāthan Siddhar
37. Paṭṭiṇathār
38. Sabda Kandhalinga Siddhar
39. Kaduveli Siddhar
40. Siddhar Sāṅga Dēvar
41. Śri Sāndhunu Bīli Krishna
Mahānu Bāvalu siddhar
42. Kavasapākkam Malapītan
Siddhar (Pūndi Siddhar)
43. Sri Perumāṇanda Siddhar, Thēni
44. Tāyumāṇavar
45. Vāthiyār Iyya, Sri Muthu
VaduganāthaSiddhar,
Siṅgampūṇari
46. Śri Sadāśiva Brahmēndirar
47. Sīriya Silambakkini Siddhar
48. Śri Betha Nārāyaṇa siddhar
49. Idiyāppa Siddhar
50. Sīnanthal, Śiva Peruvala Siddhar
51. Tiruvallam Pāmbaṇiyan Siddhar
52. Gana Thaṅganan Siddhar
53. Pākkar
54. Iḍaikādar
55. Chairman Aruṇāchalam

Source: Ganamanjari Sambathkumar, *Śivamayam Kaṇḍa Siddhargal*, Sri Indhu Publications, Chennai, 2008

**List of 18 Siddhars with their Place and Caste as per imaginary picture found in
Tañjāvūr Saraswathi Mahāl library**

Name	Place	Caste
1. Tirumūlar	Tillai	Tacchar (carpenter)
2. Daṇvaṇtri	Vaithīśvarankoil	Vaṇigar (Trader)
3. Koṅgaṇavar	Tirupathi	Kosavar (Potter)
4. Kodumba Siddhar (Kudambai Siddhar)	Māyavaram (Mayiladudurai)	Kārai kāttar
5. Rāmadēvar	Aḷagarmalai	Reddy
6. Vālmīgar	Reddykudi	Vēduvan (Hunter)
7. Patañjali	Rāmēśvaram	Chetty
8. Karuvūrār	Karuvūr	Kudimagan Jāti/ Paṇikar
9. Kumbamuṇi	Tiruvanandapuram	Brahmana
10. Kamalamuṇi	Tiruvalur	Kaṇṇār Jāti (Black Smith?)
11. Nandidēvar	Kāsi	Brahmana
12. Gōrakar	Poiyūr	Vaṇigar (Trader)
13. Edakāttār (Iḍaikātar)	Tiruvaṇṇāmalai	Iḍaiyar (Shepherd)
14. Bōgar	Paḷaṇi	Kosavanar (Potter)
15. Saṭṭaimuṇi	Śriraṅgam	Sēniyar Jāti
16. Pāmpāṭṭi	Tirukaḍaiyūr	Sēdar Jāti
17. Macchamuṇi	Tiruparaṅkuṇḍram	Sembadavar (fisherman)
18. Sundarāṇandar	Madurai	Reddy

**List of 18 Siddhars and their Abodes as found in the Pamphlet ‘Pathinēn
Siddhargal Saraṇam’ issued by the Arulmighu Karuvurar Saṇmarga Saṅgam,
Tañjāvūr**

1. Agathiyar	—	Aṇantha Sayaṇam
2. Agappēy Siddhar	—	Tiruvaiyāru
3. Aḷugaṇṇi	—	Nāgapattīṇam
4. Iḍaikādar	—	Tiruvaṇṇāmalai
5. Karuvūrār	—	Kālahasti
6. Kamalamuṇi	—	Madurai
7. Kāḷaṅgi Nātha	—	Kāñchi
8. Kudambai	—	Mayilādudurai
9. Gōrakkār	—	Trigōṇamalai
10. Saṭṭainātha	—	Śriraṅgam
11. Koṅgaṇavar	—	Tirupathi
12. Tirumūlar	—	Chidambaram
13. Tēraiyyar	—	Pothigai
14. Nandhidēvar	—	Kāsi
15. Patañjali	—	Rāmēśvaram
16. Pāmpāṭṭi	—	Marudhamalai
17. Bōgar	—	Paḷaṇi
18. Macchamuṇi	—	Tirupparaṅkuṇḍram

**List of Siddhars and Rishis as found in the Pamphlet ‘Siddhargal Tiruvaḍi Pōṟṟi’
issued by the Aruḷmighu Karuvūrār Sanmārga Saṅgam, Tañjāvūr**

(It starts with prefix ‘Om’ followed by the Siddhar’s names and ends with refrain ‘Tiruvadigal Pōṟṟi’)

- | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Agathīsar | 33. Saṅgamuṇi Siddhar | 65. Paramānandar |
| 2. Agapēy | 34. Saṅkara Mahariṣi | 66. Parāsarishi |
| 3. Asuvani dēvar | 35. Saṭṭai Nāthar | 67. Pāmbāṭṭi |
| 4. Anumān | 36. Sandikēsar | 68. Piṅgala Muṇivar |
| 5. Ambigānandar | 37. Satyānandar | 69. Brighu Mahariṣi |
| 6. Aruṇagirināthar | 38. Śivavākkiyar | 70. Brama Muṇivar |
| 7. Aruḷnandi Sivāchāriyar | 39. Śivānandar | 71. Puṇṇākkīsar |
| 8. Aḷugaṇṇi | 40. Sugabrāhmmar | 72. Pulathīsar |
| 9. Iḍaikādar | 41. Subramaṇiyar | 73. Pulipāṇi |
| 10. Rāmaliṅga Sāmy | 42. Sundarānandar | 74. Pūnaikkanār |
| 11. Rāmadēvar | 43. Sūriyānandar | 75. Bōgar |
| 12. Rāmānandar | 44. Janagar | 76. Macchamuṇivar |
| 13. Avvaiyār | 45. Jaṇandaṇar | 77. Mayurēsar |
| 14. Kañjamalai | 46. Janādanar | 78. Māṇikkavāsagar |
| 15. Kadaippillai | 47. Janakumārar | 79. Mārkaṇḍēyar |
| 16. Kaduvēli | 48. Danvantri | 80. Mālaṅgan |
| 17. Gananāthar | 49. Tāyumāṇavar | 81. Mirugaṇḍa Riṣi |
| 18. Kaṇapathi dāsar | 50. Gñānasambandar | 82. Muthānandar |
| 19. Kamalamuṇi | 51. Tirunāvukkarasar | 83. Mēikaṇḍa dēvar |
| 20. Karuvūrār | 52. Tirumāḷigai Dēvar | 84. Mouṇa Siddhar |
| 21. Kalluli Siddhar | 53. Tirumūla Dēvar | 85. Yūgi Muṇivar |
| 22. Kalaikottu Muṇivar | 54. Tiruvaḷḷuvar | 86. Yōga Siddhar |
| 23. Kāgapuṇḍar | 55. Tēraiyyar | 87. Yōgānandar |
| 24. Kālaṅgināthar | 56. Nandanār | 88. Rōmariṣi |
| 25. Kugai-Namachivāyar | 57. Nandīsvavar | 89. Vasista Mahariṣi |
| 26. Kudambai | 58. Nāthantha Siddhar | 90. Varadhariṣi |
| 27. Kumaragurubarar | 59. Nāradar | 91. Varariṣi |
| 28. Guru Dakṣiṇāmūṛty | 60. Nondi Siddhar | 92. Varāhimigi |
| 29. Guru Rājar | 61. Paṭṭināthār | 93. Vālmīgi |
| 30. Kūrmānandar | 62. Bhathragiriyār | 94. Viṣvāmitrar |
| 31. Koṅganēswarar | 63. Patañjali | 95. Vyāsamuṇivar |
| 32. Gōrakkar | 64. Bharathuvājar | |

Siddhas of Tirunelveli District

1. Agathiyar
2. Apparāndha Swāmigaḷ
3. Arikesava Nallūr Tirumuttaiya Bhāgavadhar
4. Śri Rāmamūrthy Swāmigaḷ
5. Umaru Pulavar
6. Karuvai Pēroli
7. Śri Kumara Gurubarar
8. Kōdaganallūr Sundara Swāmigaḷ
9. Saṅgu Swāmigaḷ
10. Śri Sivānandha Saraswathi Swāmigaḷ
11. Earal Nagar Chairman Siddhar
12. Gñāniyār Adigaḷ
13. Timmarājapuram Śri Picchu Swāmigaḷ @ Sri Sundararāja Swāmigaḷ
14. Nammālvār
15. Namaśivaya Kavirāyar
16. Paṇaiyūr Āṇḍavargal: Śri Saṅkara Nārāyaṇa and Śri Dakṣiṇāmūrthy Swāmigaḷ
17. Ponnaiyāh Swāmigaḷ
18. Śri Mouṇaguru Swāmigaḷ
19. Śri Rettiyāpaṭṭi Swāmigaḷ
20. Valla Nāṭṭu Swāmigaḷ
21. Vaithiyaliṅga Swāmigaḷ
22. Hazarath Umaroli Nāyagam
23. Hazarath Thaika Sahibvoli Nāyagam
24. Hazarath Sheik Muhammad Vāliholi Nāyagam
25. Śri Kēmal Swāmigaḷ

Source: Sakthi B. Subramanian, *Nellai Mavatta Sitharkal*, The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society, Tinnevely, Limited, 1995

List of Eelattu (Śri Laṅkan) Siddhas

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Kadaiyir Sāmigaḷ | 9. Sadaivaradha Sāmigaḷ |
| 2. Paramaguru Sāmigaḷ | 10. Ānandha Sadākśra Guru |
| 3. Kuḷandaivel Sāmigaḷ | 11. Sollāṭchi Ammaiyār |
| 4. Aruḷambala Sāmigaḷ | 12. Tālaiyan Sāmigaḷ |
| 5. Yōgar Sāmigaḷ | 13. Mahādēva Sāmigaḷ |
| 6. Nava Nātha Sāmigaḷ | 14. Sadaiyamma |
| 7. Periyāṇaikutṭi Sāmigaḷ | 15. Nāganātha Sāmigaḷ |
| 8. Sitthāṇaikutṭi Sāmigaḷ | 16. Nainathīvu Sāmigaḷ |

Source: Na. Muthiah, *Eelattu Siththarkal* (Mystics of Sri Lanka), (Tamil), Kumaran Publishers, Chennai, 1994

List of 84 Mahāsiddhas and their Titles (lived between 8th & 12th Centuries)

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|---|
| 1. The Mahāsiddha Lūipa | – | The Fish-Gut Eater |
| 2. The Mahāsiddha Līlapa | - | The Royal Hedonist |
| 3. The Mahāsiddha Virūpa | - | Dākini-Master |
| 4. The Mahāsiddha Dōmbipa | - | The Tiger-Rider |
| 5. The Mahāsiddha Śavaripa | - | The Hunter |
| 6. The Mahāsiddha Saraha | - | The Great Brahmin |
| 7. The Siddha Kaṅkāripa | - | The Lovelorn Widower |
| 8. The Mahāsiddha Mīṇapa | - | The Hindu Jonah |
| 9. The Nāth Siddha Gōrakṣa | - | The Immortal Cowherd |
| 10. The Nāth Siddha Cauraṅgipa | - | The Dismembered Stepson |
| 11. The Siddha Vīṇāpa | - | The Musician |
| 12. The Mahāsiddha Sāntipa | - | (Ratnākaraśānti), The Complacent Missionary |
| 13. The Mahāsiddha Tantipa | - | The Senile Weaver |
| 14. The Siddha Cāmāripa | - | The Cobbler |
| 15. The Siddha Khadgapa | - | The Fearless Thief |
| 16. The Mahāsiddha Nāgārjuna | - | Philosopher and Alchemist |
| 17. The Mahāsiddha Kānhapa | - | (Kṛsnācārya), The Dark Siddha |
| 18. The Mahāsiddha Āryadeva | - | (Karnaripa), The One-Eyed |
| 19. The Siddha Thaganapa | - | The Compulsive Liar |
| 20. The Mahāsiddha Nāropa | - | The Dauntless |

21. The Siddha Śyalipa	-	The Jackal-Yogin
22. The Mahāsiddha Tilopa	-	The Great Renunciate
23. The Siddha Catrappa	-	The Lucky Beggar
24. The Siddha Bhadrappa	-	The Exclusive Brahmin
25. The Siddha Dukhandi	-	The Scavenger
26. The Siddha Ajogi	-	The Rejected Wastrel
27. The Siddha Kālappa	-	The Handsome Madman
28. The Siddha Dhobipa	-	The Wise Washerman
29. The Siddha Kaṅkana	-	The Siddha-King
30. The Mahāsiddha Kambala	-	(Lwa Wa Pa), The Black-Blanket-Clad Yogin
31. The Mahāsiddha Deṅgipa	-	The Courtesan's Brahmin Slave
32. The Siddha Bhandepa	-	The Envious God
33. The Siddha Tantepa	-	The Gambler
34. The Mahāsiddha Kukkuripa	-	The Dog-Lover
35. The Siddha Kucipa	-	The Goitre-Necked Yogin
36. The Siddha Dharmapa	-	The Eternal Student
37. The Siddha Mahipa	-	The Greatest
38. The Siddha Acinta	-	The Avaricious Hermit
39. The Siddha Babhaha	-	The Free Lover
40. The Siddha Nalinapa	-	The Self-Reliant Prince
41. The Mahāsiddha Bhusuku	-	(Śāntideva), The Idle Monk
42. The Mahāsiddha Indrabhūti	-	The Enlightened Siddha-King
43. The Siddha Mekopa	-	Guru Dread-Stare
44. The Siddha Kotālipa	-	(Tog tse pa), The Peasant Guru
45. The Siddha Kamparipa	-	The Blacksmith
46. The Mahāsiddha Jālandhara	-	The Dākinī's Chosen one
47. The Mahāsiddha Rāhula	-	The Rejuvenated Dotard
48. The Siddha Dharmapa	-	(Gharbari), The Contrite Pandita
49. The Siddha Dhokaripa	-	The Bowl-Bearer
50. The Siddha Medhini	-	The Tired Farmer
51. The Siddha Paṅkajapa	-	The Lotus-Born Brahmin
52. The Mahāsiddha Ghantāpa	-	The Celibate Bell-Ringer

53. The Siddha Jogipa	-	The Siddha-Pilgrim
54. The Mahāsiddha Celukapa	-	The Revitalized Drone
55. The Siddha Godhuripa	-	The Bird-Catcher
56. The Siddha Lucikapa	-	The Escapist
57. The Siddha Nirguṇapa	-	The Enlightened Moron
58. The Siddha Jayānanda	-	Crow Master
59. The Siddha Pacaripa	-	The Pastrycook
60. The Siddha Campaka	-	The Flower-King
61. The Siddha Bhiksanapa	-	Siddha Two-Teeth
62. The Siddha Dhilipa	-	The Epicurean Merchant
63. The Siddha Kumbharipa	-	The Potter
64. The Nāth Siddha Carbaripa	-	(Carpati), The Petrifier
65. The Yoginī Siddha Manibhadra	-	The Happy Housewife
66. The Yoginī Siddha Mekhalā	-	The Elder Severed-Headed Sister
67. The Yoginī Siddha Kanakhalā	-	The Younger Severed-Headed Sister
68. The Siddha Kilakilapa	-	The Exiled Loud-Mouth
69. The Siddha Kantalipa	-	The Ragman-Tailor
70. The Siddha Dhahulipa	-	The Blistered Rope-Maker
71. The Siddha Udhilipa	-	The Bird-Man
72. The Kapāli Siddha Kapālapa	-	The Skull-Bearer
73. The Siddha Kirapālapa	-	(Kilapa), The Repentant Conqueror
74. The Mahāsiddha Sakara	-	(Saroruha), the Lotus-Born
75. The Siddha Sarvabhaksa	-	The Glutton
76. The Mahāsiddha Nāgabodhi	-	The Red-Horned Thief
77. The Mahāsiddha Dārikapa	-	Slave-King of the Temple Whore
78. The Siddha Putalipa	-	The Mendicant Icon-Bearer
79. The Siddha Upanaha	-	The Boot-maker
80. The Siddha Kokilipa	-	The Complacent Esthete
81. The Mahāsiddha Anaṅgapa	-	The Handsome Fool
82. The Yoginī Mahāsiddha Lakṣmīnkara	-	The Crazy Princess
83. The Siddha Samudra	-	The Pearl Diver
84. The Siddha Vyālipa	-	The Courtesan's Alchemist

Source: Keith Dowman (Trans.), *Masters of Mahāmudrā: Songs and Histories of the Eighty-Four Buddhist Siddhas*, State University, New York Press, 1985

Appendix - 2
List of Puducherry Siddhas – list I

1. Śri Lakṣmaṇa Swāmy, E.C. R. Kīlputhupet, Iyannar Koil Backside.
2. Śri Śivajñāna Bālayya Swāmy, E.C. R. Bommaiarpalayam.
3. Śri Guru Siddhāṇanda Swāmy, E.C. R. Karuvadikuppam.
4. Śri Vēdāntha Swāmy, Vasanth Nagar, Opp-Ration Shop, Muthialpet.
5. Śri Akkā Swāmy - Nārayaṇa Paradesi Swāmy, Athithi Inn Backside, Vaithikuppam.
6. Śri Thollai Kādhu Swāmy, Maṇakula Vināyagar Temple, Puducherry.
7. Śri Nāgaliṅga Swāmy, Ambalathadaiyār Maḍam (Chetti koil back st.) Puducherry.
8. Śri Moula Sāhib Swāmy, Mulla St, Opp-Railway Station, Puducherry.
9. Śri Kathirvēl Swāmy, Brindavan, 3rd cross.
10. Śri Kambali Jñāna Dēśiga Swāmy, Industrial Estate, Tattāñchāvady.
11. Śri Perivarkku Periyār Swāmy, Poṇṇi Amman koil, Pākkamudaiyānpet.
12. Śri Kaduveli Swāmy, Irumbai, (referred in Tēvāram songs).
13. Śri Sadaiyappar Swāmy, Vaḷudhāvūr, Opp. Rani Hospital.
14. Śri Sacchidāṇanda Swāmy, Siruṅgēri Matha, 100 feet road.
15. Śri Śakthivēl Paramāṇanda Swāmy, Kāramaṇikuppam, (near railway gate).
16. Śri Thēṅgāi Swāmy, opp- E.B. Villianur
17. Śri Rāma Paradesi Swāmy, Villianur
18. Śri Badē Sāhib, Chiṇṇa Bābu Samudram.
19. Śri Vaṇṇāra Paradesi Swāmy, Odiampattu.
20. Śri Aḷagappar Swāmy, Theṇṇampākkam.
21. Śri Śivapragāsam Swāmy, Nallārtūr.
22. Śri Guru Swāmy Ammal, Ariyur (Villupuram Road)
23. Śri Dakṣiṇāmūrthy Swāmy, Paḷḷi Thennal, (Villupuram Road)
24. Śri Mottai Swāmy, Ariyāṅkuppam, Cuddalore Road.
25. Śri Śivajñāna Bāla Siddhar Swāmy, Mailam Murugan Koil.
26. Śri Gaṇapathy Swāmy, Karuvadikuppam, Edaiyañchavady st, (Maruthi School backside).
27. Śri Kuṇḍaliṇi Siddhar Swāmy, Tiruvakarai koil.
28. Śri La Śri Arul Śakthi Annai, Pillaiyarkuppam, Cuddalore road.
29. Śri Maṇṇurutti Swāmy, Thennaṅsalai, near bus stand.
30. Śri Aravindar and Annai, Puducherry.

Source: Advertisement Banner placed by volunteers in front of the Siddha temples of Puducherry.

List of Puducherry Siddhas – list II

1. Śri Guru Siddhāṇanda Swāmy, E.C. R. Karuvadikuppam.
2. Śri Yālpāṇam Kathirvēl Swāmy, Brindavan, 3rd cross
3. Śri Ēmbalam Appār Swāmy, Ēmbalam
4. Śri Nāgalinga Swāmy, Ambalathadaiyār Madam (Chetti koil back st.)
Puducherry
5. Śri Thollai Kādhū Swāmy, Maṇakula Vināyagar Temple, Puducherry
6. Śri Kambali Jñāna Dēsiḡa Swāmy, Industrial Estate, Tattanchavady.
7. Śri Satty Sāmy
8. Śri Akkā Paradesi Swāmy, Athithi Inn Backside, Vaithikuppam
9. Śri Valaipala Sāmy.
10. Śri Thēṅgāi Swāmy, opp- E.B. Villianur
11. Śri Rāma Paradēsi Swāmy, Villianur
12. Śri Guru Swāmy Ammal, Ariyur (Villupuram Road)
13. Śri Maṇṇuruṭṭi Swāmy, Thennaṅsalai, near bus stand.
14. Sadai Thāyārammāl
15. Śri Dakṣiṇāmūrthy Swāmy, Paḷḷi Thennal, (Villupuram Road)
16. Śri Tirukkāṅḡi Sāmy.
17. Śri Aḷagappar Swāmy, Theṇṇampākkam
18. Śri Suppurāya Paradesi.
19. Śri Śakthivēl Paramāṇanda Swāmy, Kārāmaṇikuppam, (near railway gate)
20. Śri Dēvarāssu Swāmy
21. Appa Paithiyam Sāmy
22. Śri Lakṣmaṇa Swāmy, E.C. R. Kīlputhupet, Iyannar Koil Backside.
23. Śri Vēdāntha Swāmy, Vasanth Nagar, Opp-Ration Shop, Muthialpet.
24. Śri Moula Sāhib Swāmy, Mulla St, Opp-Railway Station, Puducherry.
25. Śri Badē Sāhib, Chiṇṇa Bābu Samudram.
26. Murugaṇ Adimai Pacchayammāl
27. Pavaḷakodi Sāmy

Source: C. S. Murugesan, *Puducherry Siddhargal*, Puducherry.

Appendix – 3

List of Siddhas as per the handbook of the Kambalikārankuppam Matha, Puducherry (in Tamil Alphabetic)

1. Agasthiyar	27. Karuvūr Dēvar	53. Śivayōga
2. Agappēy Siddhar	28. Kalluli Siddhar	Māmuṇivar
3. Asuvini Dēvar	29. Kālai Kōttu	54. Śivavākkiyar
4. Attiri Mahariṣi	Muṇivar	55. Śivāṇandar
5. Anumān	30. Kaubāla Siddhar	56. Suga Brahmamar
6. Ambigāṇandar	31. Gaṇarāmar	57. Sundarāṇandar
7. Aruṇagirināthar	32. Kāgapuṇḍar	58. Sundaramūrthy
8. Aruṇandhi	33. Kāsiyar	59. Sūthamuṇivar
Śivāchāriyār	34. Kālaṅgi Nāthar	60. Sūryāṇandar
9. Allama Prabhu	35. Kugai	61. Sūlamuṇivar
10. Aḷugaṇṇi Siddhar	Namachivāyar	62. Sēthumuṇivar
11. Iḍaikādar	36. Kudambai Siddhar	63. Sorūbāṇandar
12. Rāmaliṅga Sāmigaḷ	37. Kumara Gurubarar	64. Jambu Mahariṣi
13. Rāmadēvar	38. Guru	65. Jamadkaṇi
14. Rāmānandar	Dakṣiṇāmūrthy	66. Jaṇagar
15. Umāpathi	39. Gururājar	67. Janandhanar
Śivāchāriyār	40. Kurumbai Siddhar	68. Janādanar
16. Avvaiyār	41. Kūrmānandar	69. Janakumarar
17. Kaṇḍjamalai Siddhar	42. Koṅganēśwarar	70. Jaganāthar
18. Kadaippillai	43. Gōrakar	71. Jayamuṇivar
Siddhar	44. Kousigar	72. Jñāna Siddhar
19. Kaduveli Siddhar	45. Gowthamar	73. Paramāṇandar
20. Kaṇṇāṇandar	46. Saṅgamuṇi Siddhar	74. Daṇvaṇtri
21. Kaṇṇi Siddhar	47. Saṅkara Mahariṣi	75. Tāyumāṇavar
22. Gaṇa Nāthar	48. Saṅgili Siddhar	76. Thāṇandar
23. Gaṇapathi Dāsar	49. Sachithāṇandar	77. Trigōṇa Siddhar
24. Kadamba Mahariṣi	50. Sattanāthar	78. Gñānasambandar
25. Kabilar	51. Chandikēsar	79. Tirunāvukkarasar
26. Kamala Muṇivar	52. Satyāṇandar	80. Tirumāḷigai Dēvar

81. Tirumūla Dēvar	98. Pidināgīsar	115. Mēykaṇḍa Dēvar
82. Tiruvaḷḷuvar	99. Brighu Mahariṣi	116. Mouṇa Siddhar
83. Durvāsa Muṇivar	100. Brahmamuṇivar	117. Yāgōbu
84. Tēraiṣar	101. Pīr Muhamad	118. Yūgi Muṇivar
85. Nandanār	102. Puṇṇākkīsar	119. Yō Siddhar
86. Nandīsvaṛar	103. Pulathīsar	120. Yōgānandar
87. Nāthāṇḍa Siddhar	104. Pulippāṇi Siddhar	121. Rōmariṣi
88. Nāradhar	105. Pūṇaikkaṇṇar	122. Vaśista Mahariṣi
89. Noṇḍi Siddhar	106. Bhōga Mahariṣi	123. Varadhariṣi
90. Paṭṭinathār	107. Matsyamuṇivar	124. Varariṣi
91. Bhatragiriṣār	108. Masthān	125. Varāhimigi
92. Patañjaliṣār	109. Mayurēsar	126. Vālmīgi
93. Parathuvāsar	110. Māṇickavāsagar	127. Viśvāmitrar
94. Paramāṇandar	111. Mārkaṇḍēyar	128. Vyākramar
95. Parāsaṛiṣi	112. Mālaṅgan	129. Vyāsamūṇivar
96. Pāmpāṭṭi Siddhar	113. Mirukandariṣi	130. Viḷaiyāttu Siddhar
97. Piṅgala Muṇivar	114. Muthāṇandar	131. Vēdānta Siddhar

All of these starts with the auspicious word ‘*Ōm*’ and ends with the refrain ‘*Tiruvadigal Pōṛri*’.

Source: Raṅgarāsa Dēsiḡa Swāmigal, *Siddhargal Pōṛri Toguppu*, (handbook) Arul Oli Jñāna Nilayam, Kambalikaṛankuppam, 2011

Appendix - 4

List of Tamil Siddhas (Displayed in Tavatiru Chitramuthu Adigaḷ and Vīra Aruṭpragāsa Sāmigaḷ Mutt, Kambalikārankuppam, Puducherry)

1. Thollaikādu Swāmigaḷ, Maṇakuḷa Viṇāyagar temple
2. Śrī Nāgalinga Swāmigaḷ (*Jīva Samādhī*), Śrī Ambalatadaiyār mutt (Āṇi 7th *Gurupūja*)
3. Śrī Moula Sāhib Swāmigaḷ, Mulla St., Puducherry
4. Śrī Guru Akkā Sāmigaḷ (*Jīva Samādhī*), Śrī Akkā Sāmi Mutt, Vaithikuppam, (Āṇi *Gurupūja*)
5. Śrī Nārāyaṇa Paradēsi, Akkā Sāmy Mutt, Puducherry. (disciple of Akkā Sāmy - Mārgaḷi Tiruvāthirai *Gurupūja*)
6. Śrī Kathirvēl Sāmigaḷ, 3rd cross st., Brindhavan, Puducherry
7. Śrī Siddhāṇḍha Swāmigaḷ, (*Jīva Samādhī*), Karuvadikuppam, Puducherry. (Vaikāsi 15th, *Magam* Star, *Gurupūja*)
8. Śrī Vēdhānantha Sāmigaḷ, (Śrī Vēlāyutham Sāmy temple), Tiruvaḷḷuvar Nagar, Muthialpet.
9. Śrī Kambali Gñāna Dēsiga Sāmigaḷ (*Jīva Samādhī*), Thattāñchāvadi, Industrial Estate, Mārgaḷi 6th *Gurupūja*)
10. Śrī Periyavargalukum Periyavar Sāmigaḷ, Thattāñchāvadi, Industrial Estate, (back side of the Śrī Kambali Gñāna Dēsiga Sāmigaḷ mutt)
11. Śrī Sadaiyappar Sāmigaḷ, (opp. Rāṇi Hospital), Vaḷuthāvūr Road, Pondy
12. Śrī Maṇṇuruṭṭi Sāmigaḷ, Thennañsālai, Suburāyapiḷḷai Thōṭṭam, Pondy Bus stand backside)
13. Śrī Subramaṇiya Abinava Satchithāṇḍha Sāmigaḷ, Siruṅgēri Mutt, Ellaipiḷḷai Chāvady
14. Śrī Sandhāṇa Sāmigaḷ, Siruṅgēri mutt, Ellaipiḷḷai Chāvady, (opp Serathoppu) Puducherry
15. Śrī Śakthivēl Sāmigaḷ, Kārāmaṇikuppam (near railway gate) Pondy. (Ādi 2nd *Gurupūja*)
16. Śrī ŚivaGñāna Bālaiya Siddhar, Bommaiyaṛ Pālayam
17. Śrī Lakśmaṇa Sāmigaḷ, Puthupattu, (back side of Iyanār temple) Kālāpēt, Pondy.
18. Śrī Gaṇapathy Sāmigaḷ, Karuvadikuppam, Edaiyāñchāvady st., (back side of Airport)
19. Śrī Thēṅgāi Sāmigaḷ, Villianur Road, Tattanchavady (opp to EB substation)
20. Śrī Rāmaparadēsi Sāmigaḷ, Sulthānpēt, Pondy
21. Viyōmā Sāmigaḷ (Tirukkāñji Sāmigaḷ), Kaṇuvāpēt, Villianur, Puducherry

22. Śrī Dakṣiṇāmūṛthy Sāmigaḷ, Paḷḷi Theṇṇal (near Vadamaṅgalam), Āṇi 26th
Gurupūja)
23. Śrī Gurusāmi Ammal, Ariyūr, (Chitirai full moon day *Gurupūja*)
24. Śrī Mahān Badē Sāhib (*Jīva Samādhī*), Chinṇabābu Samudram, Kaṇḍamaṅgalam,
(on Āyilya star of Māsi month *Gurupūja*)
25. Śrī Mahān Vaṇṇāra Paradesi Sāmigaḷ, Odiyampattu, Kombākkam
26. Śrī la Śrī Aruḷ Śākthi Aṇṇai Śākthi Pītam, Pillaiyārkuppam, Kirumāmbākkam.
(her Guru's Rettīyapatti Sāmy memorial also here)
27. Śrī Bagavantha Sāmigaḷ, Puduppālayam, Cuddalore
28. Śrī Dayāṇandha Sāmigaḷ, Puduppālayam, Cuddalore
29. Sarguru Nityāṇanda, Kolippākkam, (Pattāmpākkam-4.5 km from Aṇṇa Grāmam)
30. Śrī Kaduveli Siddhar, Tiruchittrambalam, Irumbai
31. Śrī Śivagṇāna Bāla-Siddhar, Mailam Murugaṇ Temple (North side)
32. Śrī Suburāya Paradēsi , Mailam Murugaṇ Temple (*Jīva Samādhī* is on the
sanctum)
33. Śrī Kuṇḍalini Siddhar, Thiruvakkarai (10 km north from Madagadipattu)
34. Śrī Pavaḷaṅkudi Siddhar, Sōmbattu, (near Tirukkanūr, via Sellipattu, Sōrappattu)
35. Śrī Raṅgasāmi Siddhar, Sōmbattu
36. Śrī Śivapragāsa Sāmigaḷ, Nallāṛrūr, Ēmbalam (Purattāsi full moon day *Gurupūja*)
37. Śrī Aḷagar Swāmigaḷ, Thennampākkam, Ēmbalam, Pondy
38. Śrī Appar Sāmigaḷ, Thennampākkam, Ēmbalam, Pondy
39. Śrī Ulaganātha Kalarāṇandha Sāmigaḷ, Sōriyaṅkuppam (School), Bāhūr
40. Śrī Devaraj samigaḷ, Vanniyanallur, Sūnambēdu (Āṇi, Pūrāda star *Gurupūja*)
41. Śrī Kandasāmy, Kārnapattu (St. Rāmaliṅga's disciple)
42. Tirumūlar, Chidambaram
43. Bōgasiddhar, Paḷaṇi
44. Karuvūr Siddhar, Karūr (Tirukāḷahasti Ānilaiyappar temple)
45. Pulippāṇi Siddhar, Vaigāvēr (near Paḷaṇi)
46. Koṅgaṇar Siddhar, Tirupathi, Tirumala
47. Maṭṣyamūṇi, Tirupparaṅgundaram, Tiruvāṇaikkā
48. Vallaba Siddhar @ Sundarāṇandhar, Madurai
49. Saṭṭaimūṇi Siddhar, Śrī Raṅgam
50. Agathiya Siddhar, Kumbēśwara temple in Kumbakōṇam; and in
Tiruvanandhapuram
51. Tēraiyaṛ Siddhar, Thoraṇamalai (Malaiyāla Nādu)

52. Gōrakkar Siddhar, Pētur
53. Pāmpāṭṭi Siddhar, Marudhamalai, Dwāraga and Virudhāchalam
54. Śivavākkiyar, Kumbakōṇam
55. Rōmariṣi, Tirukkailai
56. Kāgapuṣuṇḍar, Trichy - Uraiyūr
57. Iḍaikāṭṭu Siddhar, Tiruvaṇṇāmalai
58. Kuthambai, Mailāduturai
59. Patañjali Siddhar, Chidambaram, Aḷagarkōil and Rāmēśwaram
60. Pulathiyar - Pābanāzam, Tiru Āvudaiyārkōil
61. Tirumūlar Nokka Siddhar, Mēlai Chidambaram
62. Aḷagaṇṇar Siddhar, Nāgapaṭṭiṇam
63. Nāradhar, Tiruvidaimarudhur, Karavainallur
64. Rāmadēsa Siddhar, Aḷagarmalai
65. Mārkaṇḍēyar, Karuvai Nallur
66. Kāsibar, Ruthragiri
67. Puṇṇākkīsar, Nannaser
68. Varadhar, Thenmalai
69. Kaṇṇi, Peruṅgāvūr
70. Taṇvaṇtri Vasittar Siddhargal, Vaithīśvaran koil
71. Nandi Siddhar, at Kāśi,
72. Tiruvāvaduthurai, Kālaṅgi
73. Kaduveli siddhar, Tirukkañchipuram
74. Viśvāmitrar, at Kāśi
75. Gauthama Siddhar, Tiruvarunai and Tiruvidaimaruthur
76. Kamalamuṇi Siddhar, Ārūr
77. Sundrānandhar Siddhar, Tiruvāñchiam
78. Sundarar Siddhar, Varitcham, Tiruvārūr
79. Kālaṅgi Nāthar, Tirukkadavur, Tiruppanandhal
80. Vālmīgi, Ettikudi, Tiruvaiyaru
81. Agappēy Siddhar, - Tiruvaiyāru, Ettikudi
82. Paṭṭinathār Siddhar, Tiruvottriyūr
83. Śri Paramachāriyar (Swāmigaḷ *Samādhi*), Kāñchipuram
84. Śri Sennimalai Siddhar, Nāṅgunēri in Kerala

85. Śrī Śadhāśiva Bramēndrar Siddhar, Nērur
86. Śrī Rāmakrishṇar, Śrī Saradha Devi, Belur Mutt
87. Śrī Rāgavēndra, Manthrālayam
88. Śrī Ramaṇa Mahariṣi, Tiruvaṇṇāmalai
89. Śrī Kumaragurubarar, Kāśi
90. Śrī Nadaṇagōpāla Nāyagi Sāmigaḷ, Kāthakkinaru
91. Śrī Gñānānandha Sāmigaḷ, Anaithu Dabovaṇaṅgal
92. Shridi Sāibaba, Shridi
93. Sēkilār Perumān, Madurai Mīṇāṭchi Amman Temple (sanctum's back side)
94. Rāmānujar, Śrī Raṅgam
95. *Paramahamsa* Yogānandhar, California
96. Śrī Yukthēśwarar, Pūri
97. Judge Swāmigaḷ, Puḍukkōṭṭai
98. Mēl Maruvattur Āthi Paraśakthi temple, 21 Swāmigaḷ *Samādhi* are there
99. Kaṇṇappa Nāyanār, Kālahasti
100. Śivapragāsa Adigaḷ, Tirupaḷaiyarai Vadathali
101. Gurubaba Rāmdēv, 13 kms from Bōgarani
102. Rāṇi Sennammal, Pithanur, Koppulu mutt
103. Būjya Śrī Siddha Narahari Guruji, Siddhāśramam (near Madurai Mariamman Theppakulam)
104. Kuḷandhaiyānandha Sāmigaḷ, Madurai Kalavāzal
105. Śrī Muthu Vaduganāthar, Siṅgampunari
106. Rāmadēvar, Nāgapaṭṭiṇam
107. Aruṇagirināthar, Tiruvaṇṇāmalai
108. Pādagachēry Rāmaliṅga Sāmigaḷ, Puṇṇai Nallur Mariamman temple, Tañjavūr
109. Mouṇasāmi Siddhar, in between Tenkāsi to Seṅkottai route
110. Siruthoṇḍa Nāyanār, Tirusetṭāṅkudi
111. Oḍukathur Sāmigaḷ, in Ulsūr Lake, Bangalore
112. Vallanāṭṭu Mahāsiddhar, Vallanādu
113. Subramaniya Siddhar, Rettiyapatti
114. Om Śrī Śivagñāna Bālasiddhar, Mailam Murugaṇ temple
115. Kambar, Nāttarasaṅkōṭṭai
116. Om Śrī Nāgaliṅga Sāmigaḷ, Ambalathadaiyār *Madam*, Pondy

117. Om Śrī Sātha Nandha Sāmigaḷ, near Śrī Sāradha Śivajñāna Pītam
118. Śrī Yōgirām Suratkumar (Visiri Sāmigaḷ), Tiruvaṇṇāmalai
119. Śrī Kōṭṭur Guru Sāmy, Kōṭṭūr near Sāthhūr
120. Tagappaṇ Magaṇ *Samādhi*, Paṇaiyūr near Girivalam Vandha Nallur
121. Nārāyaṇa Sāmy Ayya *Samādhi*, Nāgarcoil
122. Bōdēndra Sāmigaḷ, Maruthānallur, Tañjāvūr dist.
123. Avathūtharoga Nivarthīśwara Sāmigaḷ, Pūnamalle, Chennai
124. Vāṇmīga Nāthar, Ettikudi
125. Śrī Thambikālaiyan Siddhar, Marundīśwara temple at Tiruvāṇmiyūr
126. Mēivaradha Thambirān Siddhar, 25 kms from Jayaṅkoṇḍacholapuram of Trichy
127. Kuṟai Nāchiyār Mahān, Tiruvaṇṇāmalai
128. Śrī Vālai Gurusāmy, Kommadi Kōṭṭai in Chidambaram
129. Bāmban Sāmigaḷ, Tiruvāṇmiyūr
130. Kumārasāmy siddhar, Pūrandan Pālayam, Coimbatore
131. Periyālvār Sāmigaḷ, Aḷagar Koil (Madurai)
132. Māyamma Swāmigaḷ *Samādhi*, Kaṇṇiyākumari
133. Śrī Vaḷḷalār Rāmaliṅga Sāmigaḷ, Vadalūr (Mēttukuppam Siddhivilagam) died.
134. Kola Sāmigaḷ, near Kuriñjipādi bus stand
135. Suburāya Sāmigaḷ, Subburāya Sāmy Temple, Viḷappaḷḷam, Kuriñjipādi
136. Kalpaṭṭu Iyyā, Vadalūr.

Source : (List prepared and donated by Mr. M. Kannan, 60, Māruthi Illam, Chettikula Theru, Tiruvaḷḷuvar Nagar, Pondy. Mobile: 9894142932 and A. Sāraṅgapāṇi (Sāra Tailor, Kuriñjipādi), 96, Eḷai Māriamman Koil St., Muthialpet, Pondy. Mobile: 9789687905. Printed at: Śrī Murugan offset Printers, Muthialpet, Pondy, 9894850198)

Appendix - 5

Samādhi Shrines of Contemporary Siddhas of South India

Name of the Siddha	Location	Place	Details
Sorakāya Swāmi	Nārāyaṇavaṇam	Āndhra Pradesh	3 Kms from Puthūr, near Tirupati
Gūru Rāghavēndrar Swāmy	Mantrālayam	Āndhra Pradesh	near the banks of Adhoni River
Arunchalaya Ayya	Sirunamalli	Arakkōṇam	Sirunamalli near (Nemili)
Amalānanda Sāmigaḷ Vimalānanda Sāmigaḷ	Nāgavedu	Arakkōṇam	Amalānanda Swāmigaḷ <i>Maḍam</i> , Nāgavedu (near Arakkōṇam)
Arulānanda Swāmigaḷ	Narasiṅgapūram	Arakkōṇam	Madālayam, Arakkōṇam to Kavanūr
Vīrabadhra Swāmy (Ayya Swāmy)	Aruppukōṭṭai	Aruppukōṭṭai	Near Pavadi Thoppu
Dakṣiṇāmūrty Swāmy	Sokkaliṅgapūram	Aruppukōṭṭai	Near Sokkaliṅgapūram Nehru Park
Suppan Swāmiyar	Sokkaliṅgapūram	Aruppukōṭṭai	Near Kāmāṭchi Amman Temple
Ātmānanda Rāmasāmy	Sokkaliṅgapūram	Aruppukōṭṭai	Near Śivan Temple Pond - West side
Kadapārai Aḷagar Sāmi	Mēttu Guṇḍu	Aruppukōṭṭai	Mēttu Guṇḍu
Thakaram Thatti Thatha	Mēttu Guṇḍu	Aruppukōṭṭai	At Mēttu Guṇḍu - enroute Aruppukōṭṭai-Irukkaṅkudi
Puliyūrān Siddhar	Puliyūrān Village	Aruppukōṭṭai	10 Kms-Aruppukōṭṭai at Puliyūran
Reddi Swāmy	Kāṭṭaṅgudi	Aruppukōṭṭai	15 Kms -Aruppukōṭṭai at Kāṭṭaṅgudi
Kōṭṭūr Gūru Swāmy	Kōṭṭūr	Aruppukōṭṭai	Kōṭṭūr Village
Kandavēl Paradēsi	Vembūr	Aruppukōṭṭai	20 Kms- Aruppukōṭṭai-Ettayapūram
Ārumugha Swāmy	Vadakku Nātham	Aruppukōṭṭai	Vadakku Nātham Village
Sadgūru SiddharSāmy	Kalpākkam	Chennai	Puthupattīṇam near Kalpākkam
Kaṇṇiyappa Swāmi	Ambattūr	Chennai	Ambathūr State Bank Colony
Aṇṇasāmi, Ratiṇasāmi Bākiyaliṅgam	VadaPaḷaṇi	Chennai	Vaḷḷi Tirumana Mantapam, Nerkundram Road, VadaPaḷaṇi
Mallayāsāmi	Alīṇjivākkam	Chennai	near Kāranōdai-Kuchastalai Bridge
Karлакaṭṭai Siddhar	Pūnmallī	Chennai	Pūnmalle Vaithīsvaran Kōil
Aṇṇai Nīlammaiyār	Tirumullaivāyil	Chennai	North Māda Street,

Mahān Subbiah Sāmy	Tirukaḷukunṇam	Chennai	Near Tirukaḷukunṇam Bus Stand
Paṭṭinathār	Tiruvotṭriyūr	Chennai	Near Tiruvotṭriyūr Market Bus Stop. <i>Samādhi</i> is near the sea shore
Kuḷanthai Vēlāyudha Siddhar	Tirukachūr	Chennai	near Marunthīswarar Temple, Tirukachūr
Ambalavāṇa Sāmigaḷ	Vēlachērry	Chennai	Main Road (Gandhisālai tūrning)
Andhugūru Swāmigaḷ	Perambūr	Chennai	Perambūr Madhavaram High road
Elumalai Sāmigaḷ and Kollapūri Sāmigaḷ; Sāṅgu Siddha Śivaliṅga Nāyaṇar	Guindy	Chennai	No 36, Briṅgu Mānagar (opposite to Māṅgulam) M.K.N. Road, Guindy
Kōḷipi Swāmigaḷ (Śri Satyāṇanda)	Guindy	Chennai	Inside Saibaba Temple (near guindy bus stop)
Kuḷandaivēl Paradēśi Sāmigaḷ & Sanyāsi Subēdār	Ālandūr	Chennai	Abraham Nagar, Near EB Office
Muṇiappa Paradēśi Swāmigaḷ	Guindy	Chennai	Behind Mūridi's Coffee House (Presently Saṅgeetha Hotel),
Mūrugappa Sāmigaḷ @ Thaṅgavēl Sāmigaḷ	Kōdambākkam	Chennai	Near Śiva Temple, Vaḷḷiammāl Garden Main Rd, Reṅgarājpūram
Nāgamani Adigaḷār	Kandan chāvadi	Chennai	Nagamani Adigalar Sālai, Cemetery
Nir Tisai Āṇandar (Muṇusami Mudaliār)	Kṛiṣṇampet	Chennai	Gajapathy Lala Street, Kṛiṣṇampet.
Ōmṅkarāṇanda	KK Nagar	Chennai	Śri Ōmkāra Swāmi Maḍam, Gñānodaya Ālayam, Kōdambākkam
Sarasvati Ammayār & Śrimad Chidambara Periya Swāmigaḷ	Velacherry	Chennai	1, Velachery Main Road (near Gandhisālai tūrning), (near Dandīswarar temple).
Satchitāṇandar and Venugōpāla Sāmigaḷ	East Tāmbaram Rājakīlpākkam	Chennai	Śri Agaṇḍa Paripūrṇa Satchidāṇanda Sabai Gūrukṣētram
Thādikāra Swāmigaḷ	Ālandūr	Chennai	Thādikāra Sāmi Kōil street, Ālandūr
Vīrarāghavar	Tiruvotṭriyūr	Chennai	Tiruvotṭriyūr Cemetery
Vibūthi Bābā	Chitlapākkam	Chennai	1st Main Road, M.C. Nagar

Sarkarai Ammāl	Tiruvāṇmiyūr	Chennai	near Pāmban Swāmigaḷ temple
Pāmban Sāmigaḷ and Subramaṇya Dāsar	Tiruvāṇmiyūr	Chennai	Arulmighu Kumaragūrudāsar Tirukōil, Mayūrapūram
Vālmiki	Tiruvāṇmiyūr	Chennai	Opposite Marunthīswarar Temple
Ālavandhār	Nemili	Chennai	Ālavandhār Temple, Near Kōvalam.
Chidambara Sāmigaḷ	Tirupōrūr	Chennai	Tiruporūr Ādhīnam, Kandasāmy kōil
Mouṇa Swāmigaḷ	Tirupōrūr	Chennai	Kaṇṇuvārpēṭṭai, Tirupōrūr
Vīrama Muṇivar	Nuṅgambakkam	Chennai	Asalāthamman Kōil (police station)
Ādi Sēśāṇandha	Nuṅgambakkam	Chennai	Śiva Temple, Near Vaḷḷuvar Kōṭṭam
Gaṅgadhara Dēśikar	Chetpat	Chennai	Jaya Vinayakar Temple, Harrington Road 6th Avenue, Chetpat
Nadamuṇi Swāmigaḷ	Pachaiapa College	Chennai	Near Pachaiappa College
Mōti Bābā	Egmore	Chennai	Pantheon Sālai (O/o Commisioner)
Easūr Satchitāṇandar	Pūrasaiwalkkam	Chennai	Near Vasanthi Theatre
Vērkadalai Swāmigaḷ	Tiru Vi Ka Nagar	Chennai	Near Market, Tiru Vi Ka Nagar
Karapatra Śivaprakāsa Swāmigaḷ	Vyāsarpādi	Chennai	Opposite to Ambedkar College, Palla Street, Samiyar Thōṭṭam
Mahaliṅga Swāmigaḷ	Royapūram	Chennai	Śivan Kōil near Royapūram Bridge
Gūru Dakṣiṇāmūrthy Swāmigaḷ	Thōṇḍiārpēt	Chennai	Gūru Dakṣiṇāmūrthy Temple, Railway Colony,
Appudu Swāmigaḷ	Paṭṭiṇatār Kōil St	Chennai	Vaḷḷalar Temple, Paṭṭiṇathār Kōil St
Stanley Dargah	Royapūram	Chennai	Stanley Hospital, Royapūram
Hazrath Syed Mūsa Kadiri	Mount Road	Chennai	Opp to LIC
Rāj Bhavan Dargah	Guindy	Chennai	Raj Bhavan, Guindy
Sabāpathi Swāmigaḷ	Villivākkam	Chennai	Sāmiyār Maḍam, Villivākkam.
Kaṇṇappa Swāmigaḷ	Red Hills	Chennai	Kavaṅkarai
Shā-In-Shā Bābā	Red Hills	Chennai	Budūr, Red Hills
Appar Swāmigaḷ	Mylāpore	Chennai	Opp Sanskrit College. Royapetta Rd.

Muthuliṅga Sāmi and his disciples' <i>Samādhi</i>	Royapettah	Chennai	Śiva Temple (near hotel Swagath), R.H. Road,
Kuḷandaivēl Sāmy and Muthaiyah Sāmy	Mylāpore	Chennai	J.D.P Guild Building, Chitrai Kuḷam
Pūsalar	Tirunindravūr	Chennai	Arulmighu Irudayālīśvarar Kōil
Karkotaka Mahariṣi	Pūnmalle	Chennai	Vaidhyānāthar Temple
Karaikāl Ammaiṣār	Tiruvālaṅgaḍu	Chennai	Śiva Temple
Malayala Swāmigaḷ	Gūduvāñchērry	Chennai	At Kāśi Viśvanāthar Temple
Udhadi Mahariṣi	Thakkōlam	Chennai	Śiva Temple, Thakkōlam.
Śiva Gñāna Bālayōgi	Mailam	Chennai	Mūruga Temple, Mailam
Padakachēry Rāmaliṅga Swāmy	Tiruvotṛiyūr	Chennai	Near to Paṭṭiṇathār <i>Samādhi</i>
Śrīmat Sadhāṇanda Swāmigaḷ	Peruṅgulathūr	Chennai	Āśramam at Ālapākkam - Sadhāṇandapūram
Maṇṇivākkam Bābā	Maṇṇivākkam	Chennai	No 211, 6th street, Ramnagar
Rāmanātha Dīkṣitar	Naṅganallūr	Chennai	Naṅganallūr
Vīra Subbaiah Sāmigaḷ (Disciple of Karapatra Śivaprakāsa Sāmigaḷ)	Vepey	Chennai	Opposite to Buvaneshwari Theatre in Pūrasalwakkam. Perambūr barracks road.
Tiruvaṇṇāmalai Adhīnam Sabapathy Swāmigaḷ	Mylapore	Chennai	Backside Vasantha Bhavan Hotel (near Kapaliśvarar Temple, Mylapore)
Sadai Ammā alais Kamalāmmāl	Tiruvotṛiyūr	Chennai	Śrī Tiruvudai, Kodi Idai, Vadivudai Amman Kōil, Basin road, Chennai
Mouṇa Swāmigaḷ	Tiruvotṛiyūr	Chennai	Appar Kōil Street near cemetery
Kuppusāmi @ Avadhūta Swāmigaḷ	Tōṇḍiārpēt	Chennai	Vīrarāghava Swāmigaḷ <i>Samādhi</i> near Tiruvotṛiyūr cemetery
Sadai Swāmigaḷ	Tiruvotṛiyūr	Chennai	Sadai Swāmigaḷ <i>Jīva Samādhi</i>
Mahādevēndra Saraswati IV	Tiruvotṛiyūr	Chennai	Saṅkara <i>Maḍam</i> (Near Vadivudai amman temple)
Rōma Mahariṣi	Tiruvotṛiyūr	Chennai	Vadivudaiamman Temple
Rājarājēśwari Amma	Red hills	Chennai	Rājarājēśwari Amma <i>Samādhi</i> near Śrī Kaṇṇappa Sāmi Temple
Gñānachāriyār Swāmigaḷ	Karanodai	Chennai	18 siddhar <i>Maḍam</i> , Karanodai (opposite to Gopikṛiṣṇa Theatre),

Śrīmat Ubaya Ityādi Rāmānuja Yathīśvarar	Vyāsarpādi	Chennai	Samiyar <i>Maḍam</i> , Vyāsarpādi
Madanagōpāla Swāmi	Perambūr	Chennai	Melpatti Ponappa Mudali Street, opp. Iśwari Kalyāṇa Maṇḍapam.
Ēkāmbaranāthar	Ayanāvaram	Chennai	Ekaṅkipūram, near Ayanāvaram Rāghavēndra temple (dilapidated)
Madūrai Swāmigaḷ	Sembiam	Chennai	<i>Maḍam</i> street near Venus Theatre
Mylai Natarāja Sāmi	Kolatūr Peravalūr	Chennai	behind Selliamman Temple
Śrīmat Vēdāntam Puduvai Na Ethirājalu Swāmigaḷ	Erukancheri	Chennai	Ethirajalu Swāmi Street on the Erukañchēri main road.
Ayya Sūriyanātha Karuvūrar	Ambattūr	Chennai	18 Siddhar <i>Maḍam</i> , No 13, Kumāra Swāmy St, Varadharājapūram,
Mouṇa Swāmigaḷ	Ambattūr	Chennai	<i>Maḍam</i> is opp to Sakthi Theatre,
Māsilāmaṇi Sāmigaḷ	Tirumullaivoyil	Chennai	Chōlampēdu Tāmarai kuḷam, near Anjaneyar Kōil
Bhairava Siddhar	Pūnamallī	Chennai	Opp. Śrī Varasiddhi Viṇāyagar Kōil
Garudakodi Siddhar	Pūnamallī	Chennai	Near Sundara Varadaraja Perumal Temple, Thandarai bus route and place is called as Siddharkādu.
Sarva Sarpa Siddhar	Govindarāja nagar	Chennai	Śrī ŚivaSiddhar Temple, Māṅgādu
Sūrakai Swāmigaḷ	Tiruthaṇi	Chennai	Śrī Sūrakai Swāmi <i>Maḍam</i>
Diṇakara Swāmigaḷ	Gūduvāñchēri	Chennai	Kalathumedu Śivan Kōil, nearer to <i>Samādhi</i> of Śrī Malayāla Swāmigaḷ
Ethirāja Rājayōgi Swāmigaḷ	Ūrapākkam	Chennai	Karanaipuducheri village via Ūrapākkam.
Lord Govindās	G.P. Road	Chennai	<i>Jīva Samādhi</i> , Near Mahavir & Co
Appan Swāmigaḷ	Tiruvotṛiyūr	Chennai	Tiruvotṛiyūr
Śrī Avadhūta Rōga Nivarthīśvara Swāmi	Pūnamallī	Chennai	<i>Jīva Samādhi Ālayam</i> , Pūnamallī
Śrī Śivarāmalinga Sāmi	Āṇandāśramam	Chennai	Śivarāmalinga Sāmi <i>Jīva Samādhi</i>
Śrī Pūchi Swāmigaḷ	Padinallūr	Chennai	Padinallūr Amman Temple
Śrī Kōmaṇa Sāmiyār	Alamādhi	Chennai	Alamādhi Śivan Temple

Śri Kosakadai Sāmy	Tiruvotṛiyūr	Chennai	Kosakadai Sāmiyār <i>Samādhi</i>
Śri Mayil Āṇḍavar	Tiruvotṛiyūr	Chennai	<i>Samādhi Ālayam</i> , Tiruvotṛiyūr.
Śri Siddhar Gaṇapati	Chennai	Chennai	Rajaji Hall opposite to PR & Sons
Śri Kaḷi Śivakaṇṇudaya Vaḷḷal	Chetpat	Chennai	Kaḷi Śivakaṇṇudaya Vaḷḷal <i>Jīva Samādhi Ālayam</i>
Śri Subramanya Sāmi	Śriperumputhūr	Chennai	<i>Jīva Samādhi</i> , Nīlamaṅgalam,
Śri Sundaramūṛthy Swāmigaḷ	Oṅgūr	Chennai	Sundaramūṛthy Swāmigaḷ <i>Jīva Samādhi Ālayam</i> ,
High Coṁrt Swāmi alias Appudusāmi	Tiruvotṛiyūr	Chennai	In the location of <i>Samādhi</i> of Pāḍakachēry Rāmaliṅga Swāmy
Pāmpaṇ Swāmigaḷ	Tiruvāṇmiyūr	Chennai	Near Kalāśētra
Paraṅjōthi Mahān	Tiruvotṛiyūr	Chennai	Near Universal Peace Sanctuary
Jñāṇa Prakāsa Swāmi	Tiruvotṛiyūr	Chennai	Āśram is in North Māda Street
Guṇaṅgudi Mastān Sāhib	Rāyapūram	Chennai	Rāyapūram Vegetable Market back
Gūṛuliṅga Swāmy	Saidapet	Chennai	Karaṇīswaraṇ Temple St
Māṇickavāsagar	Chidambaram	Chidambaram	near Natarāja temple
Mouṇa Swāmigaḷ	Sabānāyagar St.	Chidambaram	39, Sabānāyagar Street
Tirumāḷigai Dēvar	Tiruvāvaduthūrai	Chidambaram	Tiruvāvaduthūrai
Tirukālar Āṇḍavar	Tirukālar	Chidambaram	near Tirukālar Śivan Temple
Kalpaṭṭu Ayya	Vadalūr	Chidambaram	Near Siddhivalagam, Vadalūr.
Jōthiliṅga Swāmigaḷ	Vadalūr	Chidambaram	Vadalūr
Rāmasāmi Siddhar	Vaḷḷalār nagar	Chidambaram	Sarva Siddhi Gñāna Sūriyan Tirusabai, Vadalūr
Gūru Namaśivāyar	Chidambaram	Chidambaram	Veṅgan St, Near Kāmarājar School
Maṛai Jñāna Sambandar	Siṅgārathōppu	Chidambaram	Near Indane Gas Godown,
Umāpathi Śivāchāriār	Chidambaram	Chidambaram	Behind Ambika Rice Mill, near Śrinivasa Theatre
Tirumūlar	Tiruvāvadutuṛai	Chidambaram	Kōmuktīswaraṇ Temple
Avadhūthar Swāmy	Chidambaram	Chidambaram	Gūru Ayyar St., Near Nandavaṇam
Ponṇambala Swāmy	Chidambaram	Chidambaram	Maṇṇārgudi Road, Chidambaram

Vaḷḷalār	Vadalūr	Chidambaram	Vadalūr
Saṭṭanāthar	Sīrkaḷi	Chidambaram	Sīrkaḷi Saṭṭanāthar Temple.
Kathirkāma Swāmy	Thenpāthi	Chidambaram	On the Banks of Uppana River
Daṇvaṇtri	Vaithīsvaran Kōil	Chidambaram	Śiva Temple,
Kumārasāmi Siddhar	Purandan Pālayam	Coimbatore	Pañchavēl Mūrugan Temple.
Kodi Swāmy	Puravipālayam	Pollāchi	In Puravipālayam Zamin Palace
Kalliyadi Bramham	Puthupaṭṭi	Dindugal	near Vada Madūrai
Otha Swāmy (Subbiah Swāmy)	Dindugal	Dindugal	West of Dindugal fort hill on the way to Muthaḷagu Paṭṭi
Nirvaṇa Mouṇagūru Swāmy	Kasavaṇampaṭṭi	Dindugal	In Kasavaṇampaṭṭi Āśram and <i>Samādhi</i> Kōil
Puṇṇāku Siddhar	Sennimalai	Erode	Inside Sennimalai Mūrugan Kōil
Śri Bagavān Nāma Bōdēndra	Riverbed	Govindapūram	14 kms from Kumbakōṇam
Magadi Siddhar	Tiruvithānkode	Kaliyakkāvilai	Near Pudupaḷḷi Amarāvathi Karai
Sadgūru Śivasami	Kaṇchipuram	Kaṇchipuram	Vellaikuḷam St., Periya Kañchi
Karapasavarāja Dēśikēndrar	Kaṇchipuram	Kaṇchipuram	5, Pañchupēṭṭai Small Street, Kaṇchipuram – 2
Kalaṅgināthar	Kaṇchipuram	Kaṇchipuram	Ēkāmparanāthar Temple
Kachiappa Muṇivar	Kaṇchipuram	Kaṇchipuram	Tiruvāvaduthūrai Āthīnam, Kañchi Piḷḷiayār Pālayam, Puthupālayam.
Śivasāmi@Pōdā Sāmi	Kaṇchipuram	Kaṇchipuram	Near cremation ground, Kañchi
Upaniṣad Bramēndrar	Kaṇchipuram	Kaṇchipuram	<i>Maḍam</i> is near Kailāsanāthar temple
Sumathīndra Tīrthar	Kaṇchipuram	Kaṇchipuram	Sumathīndra Thīrthar Brindāvaṇam
Tāṇdavarāya Sāmigaḷ	Govindavādi	Kaṇchipuram	Tāṇdavarāya Sāmigaḷ <i>Maḍam</i>
Kaṇchipuram Dargah	Kaṇchipuram	Kaṇchipuram	Kaṇchipuram
Pataṇjali Swāmigaḷ	Appūr	Kaṇchipuram	Siṅgaperumal Kōil-Appūr bus stand, near Agasthiar Āśramam
Rājarāja Bābā Siddhar	Vellarai village	Kaṇchipuram	near Kollathūr in Śriperumbudūr.

Aruḷveli Siddhar @ Sadgūru Bābā Swāmi	Śriperumbudūr	Kañchipuram	C/o Śri V. Dēvaraj, <i>Siddhar Kudil</i> , VGP Ramanujam Tower
Śri Odukaṭhūr Swāmigaḷ	Ulsūr, Bangalore	Karnāṭaka	Daṇḍayudapāṇi Temple, 13, Gaṅgadara Chetty Road, Bangalore
Karuvūrār	Karūr	Karūr	Near Paśupathīśvarar Temple, Karūr
Sadāśiva Bramhēndra	Nerūr	Karūr	On the backside of Śiva Temple
Śri Vidyādhiraḷa Chattāmbi Swāmigaḷ	Edapallykotta	Kēraḷā	Between Kollam and Karunāgapalḷi
Śri Śivāṇanda Paramahamsar	Vadakarā	Kēraḷā	<i>Jīva Samādhī Ālayam</i>
Śri Rāmadās Sāmigaḷ	Kaṇḷaṅkādu	Kēraḷā	<i>Jīva Samādhī Ālayam</i>
Aryamba Dēvi	Kāladi	Kēraḷā	Saṅkarāchārya <i>Maḍam</i>
Nirmalāṇanda Yōgi; Brahmāṇanda Swāmi Śivayōgi; and Yōgini Mātha	Ālathūr	Kēraḷā	Brahmāṇanda Swāmi Śivayōgi Āśram, Ālathūr
Kṛiṣṇa Vāthiyar; Māthru Jada Vallabar; Viśvanātha Bāgavathar Vaidyanātha Vādhyaṛ; Chellappa Dīkśidar and Yāgnēndra Dīkśidar	Pālakkad	Kēraḷā	On the banks of Soka Nasini River, Pālakkad
Srī Vidhyāhiraḷa Chattāmbi Swāmikaḷ	Panmana	Kēraḷā	16 kms north of Quilon
Saṅgu Swāmy	Pasuvanthanai	Kovilpatti	25 Kms from Kōvilpaṭṭi
Ūthupaṭṭi Swāmy	Ūthupaṭṭi	Kovilpatti	10 Kms, Kōvilpaṭṭi-Gūrumalai route
Subramaṇiya Gūru	Kaḷugumalai	Kovilpatti	Ārumuga Nagar, Nr. New Bus Stand
Śri Vijayēndra Swāmigaḷ	Kumbakōṇam	Kumbakōṇam	<i>Gūru</i> of Śri Rāgavēdra Swāmigaḷ - at Solaiappa St,
5 Vaiṣṇava Āchāryās	Āthanūr	Kumbakōṇam	Āthanūr at Kumbakōṇam
Muṇḷji Kēsa Muṇivar	Tiruvāḷaṅgādu	Kumbakōṇam	Munji Kesa Muṇivar <i>Ālayam</i>
Siddha Agathiyar and Śri Gōvinda Dīkśithar	Kumbakōṇam	Kumbakōṇam	Ādi Kumbēśvarar Temple
Śivāṇandar and Paramāṇandar - disciples of Kaṇḷanūr Suyamprakāsar	Kaṇḷanūr	Kumbakōṇam	In the Kāsi Viśvanāthar temple, near Suyamprakāsar's <i>Samādhī</i>

Mouṇa Swāmy and Aruṇāchala Swāmy	Kumbakōṇam	Kumbakōṇam	Mouṇa Swāmy <i>Maḍam</i> , Near Kumbēśvarar Kōil
Virālimalai Sadaśiva Swāmy	Tirupuvaṇam	Kumbakōṇam	Near Śivan Temple,
Sachidāṇanda Swāmi	Swāmimalai	Kumbakōṇam	Banks of Kāviri River, inside Govt. HSc School.
Chaithanya Śivam	Āduthūrai	Kumbakōṇam	towards Āduthūrai-Sūryanār Kōil. Amman Temple near the bridge.
Hara Hanthar	Kaṇchanūr	Kumbakōṇam	North West of Maniyakuḷakkarai
Suyam Prakāsar and Vaithyalinga Swāmy	Kaṇchanūr	Kumbakōṇam	South of Maṇiyakuḷakkarai in Kaṇchanūr - Kāsi Viśvanāthar Kōil
Kārai Siddhar	Āṇḍān Kōil	Kumbakōṇam	Hanuman Temple backside
Rōma Riṣi	Kūnthālūr	Kumbakōṇam	Jambukāranyēśvarar Temple
Mūṭṭai Swāmigaḷ	Tiruparaṅkundram	Madu	Mūṭṭai Swāmigaḷ <i>Maḍam</i>
Sundarāṇandar	Madūrai	Maduari	Mīṇākṣi Amman Temple
Śri Muṇiyandi Swāmi	K.Reṅgapalayam	Madūrai	25 Kms from Madūrai
Talaivirichān Sāmigaḷ	Kākkāthōppu	Madūrai	Talaivirichān <i>Maḍam</i>
Nakīrar	Madūrai	Madūrai	Śiva Temple, Saṅgapulavar Temple, West Māsi Street
Muthu Piḷḷai	Kākkāthōpu	Madūrai	Subēdār mutt, Talaivirichān <i>Maḍam</i>
Veḷḷaiyāh Swāmi	Simmakkal	Madūrai	Veḷḷaiyāh Swāmi <i>Maḍam</i>
Brahmāṇanda Swāmi	Avaniyāpūram	Madūrai	Below Avaniyāpūram Bridge
Kuṭṭiah Swāmi	Madūrai	Madūrai	Kuṭṭiah Sāmi <i>Maḍam</i> , South Veli St
Vivekāṇanda Swāmi	Āṇḍālpūram	Madūrai	Below Āṇḍālpūram Bridge
1008 Sūrēndra Brahma Nīṣṭa Śivāṇanda Sāmy	Āṇḍālpūram	Madūrai	Adjacent to Vivekāṇanda Swāmi <i>Maḍam</i> , Below Andalpūram Bridge
Śridharēndra Swāmigaḷ	Simmakkal	Madūrai	Dakṣiṇāmūrthi <i>Maḍam</i> , Vyāsarāya <i>Maḍam</i> , Pēchiamman Paditūrai
Tiruvādutuṟai Ādīnam 2 nd Pītatipati	Madūrai	Madūrai	Behind Central Cinema
Kuḷandai Āṇanda Sāmi	Kalavāsai	Madūrai	Āṇandar <i>Maḍam</i> , Near V.V complex
Tiruparaṅkuṇṇam Dargah	Tiruparaṅkuṇṇam	Madūrai	Tiruparaṅkuṇṇam Hill

Machamuṇi Siddhar	Tiruparaṅkuṇṇam	Madūrai	Kāsi Viśwanāthar Temple
Gōripālayam Dargah	Gōripālayam	Madūrai	Gōripālayam
Nataṇa Gōpāla Nāyagi Swāmigaḷ	Katha Kiṇaṇṇu	Madūrai	on the way to Aḷakar Kōil from Periyār bus stand
Saṭṭaināthar	Tiruvēdagam	Madūrai	Saṭṭaināthar <i>Maḍam</i>
Arulāṇanda Siddhar	Chōlavandān	Madūrai	Kiṇṇi <i>Maḍam</i> , Backside of Janaka Mariamman Temple
Gñāṇa Dēśikar	Chōlavandān	Madūrai	Gñāṇiyār <i>Maḍam</i>
Othai Jadaḷ Swāmigaḷ	Kodimaṅgalam	Madūrai	Othai Jadaḷ Swāmigaḷ Mutt
Kāsinātha Gñānāchāriyār	Tirupuvaṇam	Madūrai	Kasinātha Gñānāchāriyār <i>Maḍam</i> , Tirupuvaṇam
Eli Swāmi	T.Kallupaṭṭi	Madūrai	Peraiyūr (near T.Kallupaṭṭi)
Pāttaiyah Swāmi and Pāl Paḷakari	T.Kallupaṭṭi	Madūrai	Sālichandai
Śri Kamalāṇandhar	K.Reṅgapalayam	Madūrai	At Selliamman Kōil, T.Kuṇṇāthūr
Mūkiah Swāmigaḷ	Tiruparaṅkuṇṇam	Madūrai	Behind Tyagarāja Engg. College
Śri Kaḷi Sitrambala Nādigal	Siddharkādu	Mayilādutuṇṇai	Sitrambala Nādigal Maḍalayam, Siddharkādu
Pāl Swāmy	Kūṇainādu	Mayilādutuṇṇai	Tirumañchana Street, Mayilādutuṇṇai
Manivasaga Swāmy	Kūṇainādu	Mayilādutuṇṇai	Banks of Kaveri River at Kūṇainādu
Sudukattu Swāmy	Mayilādutuṇṇai	Mayilādutuṇṇai	Door No:25, Darumapūram Sālai, Mayilādutuṇṇai
Yōga Abhirami Ammaiṇṇar	Mayilādutuṇṇai	Mayilādutuṇṇai	Mūṇṇan Temple, Kacheri Street, Mayilādutuṇṇai.
Kuthampai Siddhar	Mayilādutuṇṇai	Mayilādutuṇṇai	Śiva Temple
Pāi Kaṭṭi Swāmy	Mayilādutuṇṇai	Mayilādutuṇṇai	Mayilādutuṇṇai GH Compound.
Kāḷi Sitrambala Swāmigaḷ	Siddharkādu	Mayilādutuṇṇai	Siddharkādu, Mayilādutuṇṇai
Ūrikaṭṭi Swāmi	Kuthālam	Mayilādutuṇṇai	Śētrapālapuram, Kuthālam.
Road Swāmy @ Śivarāmakṛiṣṇa Sāmy	Mathirimaṅgalam	Mayilādutuṇṇai	South of rice mill, 12 Kms from Mayilādutuṇṇai.
Sēthu Bhāva Swāmy	Kuthālam	Mayilādutuṇṇai	Inside a saw mill in between Kuthālam-Tirumañchēṇṇi.
Nāga Nātha Swāmy	Vadakkan Paṭṭi	Melūr	From Melūr-Ēriyūr-Tiruppathūr Rd.
Kōrakkar Siddhar	Vada PoikaiNallūr	Nāgapattinam	6 Kms from Nāgapattinam

Aḷukuni Siddhar	Nāgapattiṇam	Nāgapattiṇam	Nīlayatatchi Devi and Śiva Temple
Vānmīgar	Ettukudi	Nāgapattiṇam	Ettukudi
Puṇḍariga Mahariṣi	Nāgapattiṇam	Nāgapattiṇam	Kayarōgaṇam Śiva Temple,
Kāsilinga Swāmi and Saṅkara Liṅga Sāmi	Amaraviḷai	Nāgerkōil	2 Km from Amaraviḷai Sales Tax Check Post
Mouṇagūru Swāmy	Neyūr	Nāgerkōil	1 Km to Maṇḍaikādu, Lakśmipūram
Bhairava Siddhar	Maṇḍaikādu	Nāgerkōil	Maṇḍaikādu Bagavati Kōil
Vaiguṇḍar Ayya	Swāmithōppu	Nāgerkōil	10 Kms from Nāgerkōil
SadgūruNāyaṇār Sāmi	Maruthuva Malai	Nāgerkōil	Foothills, Maruthuvamalai, Pothayadi
Tūravi Veri Govindasamy	Reddiāpatti Kanthagiri	Nāmakkal	Mūrugan Temple on hilltop. 3 Km Enroute Namakkal-Tuṛaiyūr
Suyam Prakāsa Sāmi	Dhathagiri	Nāmakkal	near Dathātrēyar Temple
Bōgar Siddhar	Paḷaṇi	Paḷaṇi	Paḷaṇi Mūrugan Temple
Sādhu Swāmigaḷ	Paḷaṇi	Paḷaṇi	Sādhu Swāmigaḷ <i>Maḍam</i>
Īswara Paṭṭar	Paḷaṇi	Paḷaṇi	near Arts College
Aruḷ Nandhi Śivāchāriyar	Tiruthalūr	Pandrutti	Opposite to Śivan Temple. 10 Kms from Pandrutti.
Meikaṇḍār	Tiruvonnainallūr	Pandrutti	North St., 20 Km from Tirukōilūr.
Aḷukku Swāmy	Vēṭṭaikāranpuṭhūr	Pollāchi	Uppa River, Vēṭṭaikara Sāmi Temple
Siddhānanda Swāmy	Karuvadi Kuppam	Puduchērry	opp to Fatima H.Sc school
Śri Thoḷḷakādhū Sāmy	Puduchērry	Puduchērry	Maṇakkuḷa Viṇāyakar Temple,
Śri Akkā Swāmigaḷ	Muthiālpēṭṭai	Puduchērry	Near Ajantha Theatre, Kutiraikulam
Nāgalinga Swāmigaḷ	Puduchērry	Puduchērry	Ambalathadiyar Madathu St.
Kathirvēl Swāmigaḷ	Sithankudi	Puduchērry	Near Balaji Theatre
Śaktivēl Paramāṇanda Swāmi	Kārāmaṇikuppam	Puduchērry	Near Railway gate & Petrol Bunk
Kambili Swāmigaḷ	Thattāñchā vadi	Puduchērry	Kambili Swāmigaḷ Temple,
Dakśiṇāmūrthy Sāmy	Thennal	Puduchērry	Thennal, Pondy-Viḷupuram Road.
Subramanya Abinava Satchidānanda Bhārathi	Ellapiḷḷaichāvadi	Puduchērry	Subramanya Abinava Satchidānanda Bhārathi Temple, Near Nellithōppu,
Badē Sāhib	Chiṇṇa Bābu Samudram	Puduchērry	Badē Sāhib Dargah, Chiṇṇa Bābu Samudram

Theṅgai Swāmigaḷ	Arumāthapūram	Puduchērry	Opp to Electricity sub-station
Rām Paradēsi Swāmy	Arumāthapūram	Puduchērry	Near Railway Gate, Villiyanūr
Śrī Śivaprakāsa Sāmy	Nallārūr	Puduchērry	Near Pākkam Kūtrode & Embalam
Śrī Gūrusāmy Ammāl	Ariyūr	Puduchērry	Pondy-Viḷupūram highways
Aūrobindo & Mother	Puduchērry	Puduchērry	Aūrobindo Āśram
The Divine Mother	Puduchērry	Puduchērry	Aūroville, Puduchērry
Judge Swāmy	Pudukōṭṭai	Pudukōṭṭai	Bhuvanēswari Amman Temple
Kōdaganallūr Sundara Swāmi	Arimaḷam Village	Pudukōṭṭai	16 Kms from Pudukōṭṭai. Friend of Vaḷḷalār & Sundaram Piḷḷai's Gūru
Sūruḷi Swāmi	Vadukapaṭṭi	Pudukōṭṭai	near Kīranūr, to Pudukōṭṭai-Trichy
Gūru Sāmy; Śivakāmi Jñāṇiyār; Ārumugha Sāmy; Poṇṇappa Jñāṇiyār and Karuppa Jñāṇiyār	Rājapālayam	Rājapālayam	Ambala Puli Bazar, Rājapālayam
Chithiramuthu Adigaḷ	Paṇaikuḷam	Rāmanāthapūram	near Rāmanāthapūram
Kumarāṇḍi Swāmy	Rājapālayam	Rājapālayam	near PSK Park, Vivekāṇanda Street
Aruṇachala chempaṭṭi Jñāṇiyār	Sathirapaṭṭi	Rājapālayam	Sathirapaṭṭi
Subramaṇiyar	Sathirapaṭṭi	Rājapālayam	Vēdānta Maḍam, Sathirapaṭṭi
Tāyumāṇavar Swāmi	Velipaṭṭiṇam Lakśmipūram	Rāmanāthapūram	North side of Rāmanāthapūram - Velipaṭṭiṇam Lakshmi-pūram
Aruḷmighu Chellappa Sāmigaḷ	Ekkakudi near Utharakosamaṅgai	Rāmanāthapūram	Gūru of Śrī Sūttukōḷ Mayandi Swāmigaḷ
Pataṇjali Siddhar	Rāmēśwaram	Rāmēśwaram	In Rāmalinga Swāmi Temple
Māyamma	Salem	Salem	Enroute to Salem-Yērkādu opposite to Modern Theatre Cinema Studio
Kaṇcamalai Siddhar	Kaṇcamalai	Salem	Foothills of Kaṇcamalai - Siddhēśwara Swāmy Temple
Sadāṇandha Swāmi	Skandāśramam	Salem	Sūttukōḷ Māyāṇḍi Svāmi's disciple
Pāvai Ammal	Jagiramapālayam	Salem	Śrī Kāvadi Paḷaṇi Āṇḍavar Āśram

Pāmpāṭṭi Siddhar	Saṅkaran Kōil	Saṅkaran Kōil	Saṅkaran Kōil-Puḷiyānkudi route
Saṅkaranārāyaṇan and Dakṣiṇāmūṛthy	Panayūr	Saṅkaran Kōil	7 Kms from Karivalam Vanthanallūr near Saṅkaran Kōil
Pañcamūṛthy (Pothi Swāmy)	Karivalam Vanthanallūr	Saṅkaran Kōil	Karivalam Vanthanallūr - Enroute Saṅkaran Kōil-Rājapālayam
Sennikulam Aṇṇāmalai Reddiār	Sennikulam	Saṅkaran Kōil	3 Kms from Karivalam Vanthanallūr
Mādhavānanda Sāmy	Pampākkōil	Saṅkaran Kōil	Near Railway Station
Mūvar <i>Samādhi</i>	Tāṇipārai	Sathūragiri	near Pēchiamman Kōil at foothills
Virālimalai Ārumuga Swāmy	Kōṭṭaiyūr	Śivagaṅgai	In Kōṭṭaiyūr Town Extension.3 Kms from Kāraikudi
Vāthiyār Swāmy @ Muthu Vadukanāthar	Siṅgampunari	Śivagaṅgai	Near Bus Stand. 20 Kms from Tirupathūr
Sadāśiva Bramēndrar	Māṇāmadūrai	Śivagaṅgai	Sōmanāthar Kōil, Śivagaṅga, 18 km
Kālimuthu Swāmy	S.Rāmachandra-pūram	Śrivilliputhūr	15 Kms from Śrivilliputhūr
KailāsaSundara Sāmy	Śrivilliputhūr	Śrivilliputhūr	Kaikāṭṭi Temple. Śivakāsi Road
Ponnayiram Swāmy	Śrivilliputhūr	Śrivilliputhūr	Ūranai Patti Street in Śrivilliputhūr
Nārāyaṇa Tīrtha Sāmi	Tirupūnthūruṭhi	Taṇjāvūr	Nārāyaṇa Tīrtha Madālayam
Kāśyapa Muṇivar	Tirupūnthūruṭhi	Taṇjāvūr	Kāsi <i>Maḍam</i>
Saṅkarānandar	Tirupūnthūruṭhi	Taṇjāvūr	Near Kāsi <i>Maḍam</i>
Tyāga Brahma Swāmi	Tiruvaiyāru	Taṇjāvūr	Thyāgarājar <i>Maḍam</i> , Tiruvaiyāru
Agappēy Siddhar	Tiruvaiyāru	Taṇjāvūr	Pañcanadīśvarar Kōil, Tiruvaiyāru
Saṭṭai Muṇivar	Sīrkaḷi	Taṇjāvūr	Saṭṭaināthar Temple
TiruGñāna Sambandar	Sīrkaḷi	Taṇjāvūr	Sambandar <i>Maḍam</i> , Achalpūram
Bhadragiriyār	Tiruvidaimaruthūr	Taṇjāvūr	Mahalingēśvarar Temple
Ādi Śivaprakāsa Sāmi	Muḷiyar	Taṇjāvūr	near Tirunāgēśvaram
Haradathar	Kaṇjanūr	Taṇjāvūr	Haradathar Temple
Śrī Śridara Ayyā	Tiruvidaimaruthūr	Taṇjāvūr	Mahalingēśvarar Temple
Pāl Swāmy	Karanthai	Taṇjāvūr	Old Tiruvaiyāru Road

Akapēyi Siddhar	Tiruvaiyāru	Taṇjāvūr	Inside the Śiva Temple
Siddēśar	Tiruvaiyāru	Taṇjāvūr	Opp to Iyyārappar Temple
Singapore Swāmy (Mūrugēsan Sāmi)	Tiruvaiyāru	Taṇjāvūr	Singapore Swāmy <i>Maḍam</i> , Tiruvaiyāru
Āṇḍār Swāmy	Tiruvaiyāru	Taṇjāvūr	Mēlamāvilakom
Veṅkata Subbaiā Sāmi	Paṭṭukōṭṭai	Taṇjāvūr	in the midst of Paṭṭukōṭṭai Town
Ambalavāṇa Swāmy	Tillaivilāgam	Taṇjāvūr	Vadakādu (near Paṭṭukōṭṭai)
Kaduveli Siddhar	Kaduveli	Taṇjāvūr	2 km, Tiruvaiyāru- Tirukāṭṭupallī Rd.
Sadgūru Gaṇapathi Swāmy	Tenkāsi	Tenkāsi	Inside Mūrugan Cement Works Compound, Tenkāsi.
Śivakāmi Paradēsi Ammayār	Tirumalaikōil	Tenkāsi	In Vandādum Poṭṭal near Tirumalai Mūrugan Kōil
Ārumuga Swāmy	Pranūr	Tenkāsi	Near River Bridge
Saṅkarānantha Sāmy	Kuṭṭālam	Tenkāsi	Saṅkara Āśram
Chandira Swāmy	Kadayanallūr	Tenkāsi	Near Hanuman Temple
Śri Mouṇa Swāmi; Śri Trivikrama Rāmānanda Bhārathi and Śri Vimalānanda Bhārathi	Kuṭṭālam	Tenkāsi	Śri Siddhēśvari Pītham, Mouṇa Swāmy Maḍam, Dattātreya Āśram, Kuṭṭālam
Idaikādar	Tiruvaṇṇāmalai	Tiruvaṇṇāmalai	Adi Aṇṇāmalai,
Gugai Namachivāyar	Tiruvaṇṇāmalai	Tiruvaṇṇāmalai	Mulaipāl Tīrtham, T.V.Malai Hill.
Virupākṣi Dēvar	Tiruvaṇṇāmalai	Tiruvaṇṇāmalai	Near to Gugai Namachivāyar <i>Samādhī</i> at T.V.malai Hill
Deivasikāmaṇi Sāmy	Vēṭṭavalam	Tiruvaṇṇāmalai	1.5 Kms from Paṇḍariyār Kalyāṇa Maṇḍapam
Īsānya Dēvar	Avalūrpēṭṭai	Tiruvaṇṇāmalai	on Avalūrpēṭṭai Girivala Route.
Esakki Swāmy	Tiruvaṇṇāmalai	Tiruvaṇṇāmalai	In Girivala Rd. Pañchamuka Darśan
Adimudi Siddhar (Ārumugha Swāmy)	Tiruvaṇṇāmalai	Tiruvaṇṇāmalai	Opposite to Dhūrvasar Temple on Aṇṇāmalai Girivala Route
Ammani Ammal	Tiruvaṇṇāmalai	Tiruvaṇṇāmalai	in Girivala Rd. Opp. Isānya Līngam.
Aḷagānanda Swāmy	Tiruvaṇṇāmalai	Tiruvaṇṇāmalai	Pavalakunḍru Madālayam near Dūrgai Amman Temple
Baghavān Śri Ramaṇa	Tiruvaṇṇāmalai	Tiruvaṇṇāmalai	Śri Ramaṇāśramam, Tiruvaṇṇāmalai
Śri Sēśādhri Swāmy	Tiruvaṇṇāmalai	Tiruvaṇṇāmalai	Śri Sēśādhri Āśram

Yōgi Rām SūratKumar	Tiruvaṇṇāmalai	Tiruvaṇṇāmalai	Śri Yōgiram Āśram, Tiruvaṇṇāmalai
Vittōbāh Swāmy	Pōlūr	Tiruvaṇṇāmalai	33 Kms, Tiruvaṇṇāmalai- Vēlūr
Pūṇḍi Mahan	Pūṇḍi	Tiruvaṇṇāmalai	Pūṇḍi Village near Kalasapākkam
Paḷaṇi Swāmy & Erai Swāmy	Avalūrpēṭṭai	Tiruvaṇṇāmalai	Near Gaṇapathi Temple in Sandhai Mēdu
Sadgūru Swāmy	Kanalappādi	Tiruvaṇṇāmalai	between Tiruvaṇṇāmalai and Senji
Aṇṇan Aruṇāchala Swāmigaḷ	Puthūr	Tiruvārūr	Puthūr village in Tiruvārūr, Opp to the rice mill
Sudukāṭṭu Swāmigaḷ	Māyavaram	Tiruvārūr	Rājan Thōṭṭam, Thimmana Nāicker
Tāṇḍavarāya Swāmy & Nārāyaṇa Swāmy	Nannilam	Tiruvārūr	Main Bazar, Nannilam. 18 Kms from Tiruvārūr
Chinṇān Swāmy	Sanna Nallūr	Tiruvārūr	between Tiruvārūr - Mayilāduturai
Rāmiah Swāmy	Vanchiyam	Tiruvārūr	In Pāppanamchērry near Vanchiyam
Vaṭṭār Mouṇagūru Swāmy	Mannārkudi	Tiruvārūr	Thenvalad 6th Street, Mannarkudi near Gopinātha Perumal Temple
Rāmāṇanda Bramēndrar	Seṅgalipūram	Tiruvārūr	Seṅgalipūram. 4 Kms from Kudavāsal
Dakṣiṇāmūrthy	Tiruvārūr	Tiruvārūr	Mādappūram, Tiruvārūr
Kamala Muṇi Siddhar	Tiruvārūr	Tiruvārūr	Tiruvārūr Āṇandīśvarar Sannidhi
Koṇḡaṇa Siddhar	Tiruvāvaduturai	Tiruvāvaduturai	In a pond near IOB, known as Koṇḡaṇēśvarar Thōppu.
Tirumāḷigai Thevar	Tiruvāvaduturai	Tiruvāvaduturai	In Tiruvāvaduturai <i>Āthīnam</i>
1. Mouṇa Gūru Sāmy 2. Kāsi Swāmy 3. Ārumugha Swāmy	Tiruchendūr	Tiruchendūr	Opposite to Mūrugan Temple
Saṅkara Swāmi	Tiruchendūr	Tiruchendūr	On the beach, south to where Sūrasamhara festival ensue
Sadgūru Samhāra Mūrthy Swāmy	Tiruchendūr	Tiruchendūr	Near Saṅkara Swāmi <i>Samādhī</i>
Jñāṇiyār Adigaḷ	Kulasēkarapatṇam	Tiruchendūr	14 Kms from Tiruchendūr
Eral Aruṇāchala Sāmy	Eral	Tiruchendūr	6 Kms, Tiruchendūr- Tuticorin route
Brahma Gñāna Gūrubirān Ayyanpaṭṭi Saṅkara Swāmigaḷ	Tiruchendūr	Tiruchendūr	<i>Jīva Samādhī</i> at Ayyanpaṭṭi Saṅkara Swāmigaḷ <i>Maḍam</i> , Tiruchendūr

Taḍiyillā Siddhar	Pēṭṭai	Tirunelvēli	At end of Pēṭṭai, in Tirunelveli town
Nīlakaṇṭha Dīkṣidar	Paḷamadaḱ	Tirunelvēli	in Kāṣi Viśvanāthar Temple-14 Kms
Apparāṇanṭhar	Nettūr	Tirunelvēli	from Ālamkuḷam, Nettūr (8 Kms)
Vallanādu Chidambara Swāmy	Vallanādu	Tirunelvēli	Vallanādu enroute Tirunelveli-Tuticorin
Kaṭṭikuḷam Māyāṇḁi	Tiruparaṅkuṇṇam	Tiruparaṅkuṇṇam	Thyāgaraja Engg. College back side,
Sōmappa Swāmy	Tiruparaṅkuṇṇam	Tiruparaṅkuṇṇam	From Māyāṇḁi Swāmy <i>Samādhī</i> to Mūrugan Temple at hills
Machamuṇi Siddhar	Tiruparaṅkuṇṇam	Tiruparaṅkuṇṇam	Tiruparaṅkundram Mūrugan Temple
Isanya Gñāna Desikar	Tiruvaṇṇāmalai	Tiruvaṇṇāmalai	Īsānya <i>Maḍam</i> , Giri Valam Route
Adi Mudi Siddhar	Tiruvaṇṇāmalai	Tiruvaṇṇāmalai	On Giri Valam Route, T.V.Malai
Isakki Siddhar	Tiruvaṇṇāmalai	Tiruvaṇṇāmalai	On Giri Valam Route, T.V.Malai
Vettaveli Swāmigaḷ	Athimūr	Tiruvaṇṇāmalai	Athimūr (on the way from Pōlūr to Javvādu Malai)
Śri Masthān Swāmy (Ramaṇa's disciple)	Desūr	Tiruvaṇṇāmalai	Dēsūr 17 Kms from Tiruvaṇṇāmalai.
Śri Swayam-prakāśāṇḁa Saraswati Swāmi (Ālaṅgudi Periyavār)	Mudikoṇḁān	Tiruvārūr	Nama Dwār, New No.51, Old No.24, 7th Avenue, Ashok Nagar, Chennai
Aruḷmighu Sūṭṭukkol Rāmaḷiṅga Swāmigaḷ	Mannārgudi	Tiruvārūr	30/4 Gōpāla Samuthiram North St.
Makkan Swāmy	Trichy	Trichy	to Oyamari, from Sathiram Busstand
Yōgēśvara Swāmy (Rāmakṛiṣṇa Sāmy)	Pinṇa Vāsal	Trichy	In Palguni River Banks, Pinṇavāsal.
Nārāyaṇa Brahmēndrar	Kāṭṭuputhūr	Trichy	14 Kms from Thottiyam - North of Kaveri River, Trichy - Salem route
Talai Āṭṭi Siddhar	Perambalūr	Trichy	In Mūsa Kōṭṭai Āśramam, Bramha Rīṣi Hills. 60 Kms from Trichy
Meivara Thampirān	Senthūrai	Trichy	Paḷaṇiyāṇḁavar Temple, Senthūrai
Śri Rāmāṇujar	Śri Raṅgam	Trichy	In Śrīraṅgam Temple, near Trichy

Śrī Nārāyaṇa Gūru	Varkāla	Trivandrum	60 Kms from Trivandrum, Varkāla,
Brahmaśrī Nīlakaṇṭha Gūrupādar	Chenkottukōṇam	Trivandrum	Srī Rāmadāsa Mission, Srī Nīlakaṇṭapūram
Śrī Śivaraja <i>Yōgi</i> Ayya Swāmikal	Thycaud	Trivandrum	Śivan Kōil, Thycaud Trivandrum near Thycaud cremation ground
Śrī Erithavūr Siddhar	Erithavūr – Bālarāmapūram	Trivandrum	Daṇḍāyudapāṇi kōil – Trivandrum (20 km), Temple is near Bālapūram
Lakśmi Ammāl	Vilīñjam	Trivandrum	25 Kms from Trivandrum. Inside Muppanthal Isakki Amman temple
Dr Mystic Selvam	Mudivaithānēndal	Tuticorin	23 Kms. From Śrivaikuṇḍam
Reddiāpaṭṭi Swāmigaḷ	Vilathikulam	Tuticorin	Nāgalāpūram. Aruppukōṭṭai 31 Kms
Nallappa Swāmi	Vilathikulam	Tuticorin	Behind Vilathikulam MLA Quarters
ŚrīRāmaliṅga Adigaḷ		Vadalūr	Vaḷḷalār
Śrī Muthukrīṣṇa Sāmi	Vaḷḷiyūr	Vaḷḷiyūr	In Vaḷḷiyūr itself
Amutha Siddhar @Puṇṇākkū Siddhar and Narasimma Swāmigaḷ	Nallan Paṭṭarai	Vēlūr	Diṇakaran Bus Stop Vēlūr
Sāthukara Swāmigaḷ	Saidapet	Vēlūr	Sāthugara Swāmigaḷ <i>Maḍam</i>
Śrī Rāmagiri Yōgīswarar	Contonment Railway Station	Vēlūr	near Ankāḷa Paramēśwari Temple
Vilakṣāṇanthar	Melmayil	Vēlūr	<i>Samādhi</i> , 15 kms from Vēlūr
Subbaiyah Swāmigaḷ and Balaji @ Vīra Śivaji Swāmigaḷ	New Bus Stand Back Side	Vēlūr	Subbaiyah Swāmigaḷ <i>Samādhi</i>
Kōṇi Swāmigaḷ	Tiruvallam	Vēlūr	Śivāṇanda Mouṇa Swāmigaḷ Kōil
Tirupugaḷ Satchidāṇanda	Vaḷḷimalai	Vēlūr	Poṅgi Temple, Vaḷḷimalai
Śripaṭhi Thīrthar	Vēlūr	Vēlūr	Raghavendra Brindavanam, On the banks of River Pālār, Vēlūr
Achu Dāsar	Kaṇṇamaṅgalam	Vēlūr	<i>Maḍam</i> , is at Kaṇṇamaṅgalam
Kuppuswāmy Dēśikar	Tiruviriñjipūram	Vēlūr	Tiruviriñjipūram
Vaḷḷimalai Tirupugaḷ	Vaḷḷimalai	Vēlūr	Tirupugaḷ Āśram, Mūrugan

Swāmy			Temple. 25 Kms from Vēlūr.
Thāṅgal Mouṇagūru Swāmy	Thāṅgal	Vēlūr	37 Kms from Vēlūr.
Tiru Mūruḡa Kirubāṇḡandavāriār	Kāṅḡēyanallūr	Vēlūr	Opposite to Mūruḡan Temple, Kāṅḡēyanallūr. 7 Kms from Vēlūr
Om Namaśivāya Swāmy	Paśumāthūr	Vēlūr	(<i>Samādhi</i>) 25 Kms from Vēlūr
Thoubah Swāmy	Vēlūr	Vēlūr	Saidapet Main Bazar, Vēlūr
Śivāṇḡanda Mouṇagūru Swāmi	Tiruvallam	Vēlūr	near Vilvanātha Īśvara Temple, Tiruvallam. 16 Kms from Vēlūr
Sanakar	Tiruvallam	Vēlūr	Opp. to Vilvanātha Temple
Eḡaṅḡi Gōpāla Rāmanuja Dāsar Swāmigaḡ	Paḡamathi Malai	Vēlūr	<i>Mahā Samādhi</i>
Bālaiah Śivapragāsa Swāmigaḡ	Mailam	Viḡupūram	Mailam to Pondy Road
Kuṇḡali Muṇivār	Tiruvakarai	Viḡupūram	Tiruvakarai Temple
Vaṇṇasarabam Daṇḡapāṇi Swāmy	Tiruvāmāthūr	Viḡupūram	Kumāra <i>Maḡam</i> , Tiruvāmāthūr. 6 Kms from Viḡupūram
Jñānāṇḡanda Giri Sāmy	Tirukōilūr	Viḡupūram	3 Kms Tirukōilūr-Tiruvaṇṇāmalai.
Śri Gñānāṇḡanda Sāmi	Tirukōilūr	Viḡupūram	45 Kms from Viḡupūram
Kumāra Dēvar	Āṇḡimaḡam	Viruthāchalam	between Viruthāchalam-Āṇḡimaḡam
Thatha Swāmy	Viruthāchalam	Viruthāchalam	at the banks of Maṇimutha River
Nirvāṇa Muthukumāra Sāmy; and Śiva Paḡaṇi Jñāni	Viruthāchalam	Viruthāchalam	Near to Thatha Swāmy <i>Samādhi</i>

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